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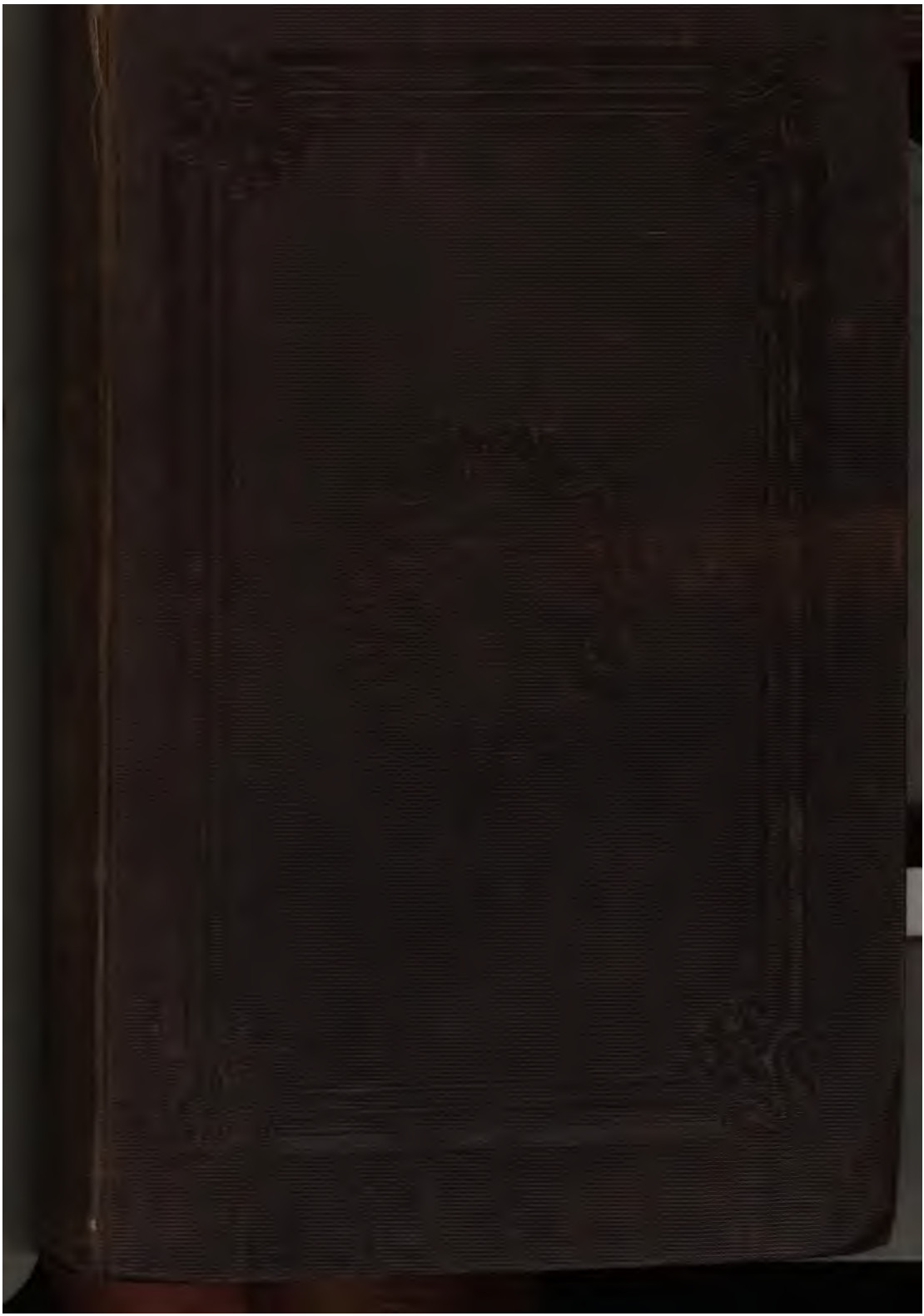

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MEMOIRS OF

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.,

FIRST LORD OF HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON."

"Another of his fashion they have not;
To lead their business."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MEMOIR OF

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SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.

During the session of 1824 public attention was directed to a claim to Royal origin, set up by an individual well known to the public, Mrs. Olive Wilmot Serres, the wife of a marine painter, of that name, of first rate celebrity in his profession. Mrs. Serres was certainly a woman of considerable talent, of extensive fashionable acquirements, who had by circumstances been introduced to an association with some of the principal persons about the Court of George, III., and was at one time attached to the household of her Majesty Queen Charlotte. She also bore a striking resemblance to several branches of the Royal Family, and

especially to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, afterwards the ill-fated Queen Caroline. The claim of affinity to the Royal Family, set up by this lady, was, that she was the legitimate daughter of the late Duke of Cumberland, brother to George, III.; his Royal Highness, it was alledged by Mrs. Serres, having been privately married to her mother, Miss Wilmot, the daughter of a clergyman of that name, and she, Mrs. Serres, being the fruit of that union. These facts were said to be well known to several persons of high rank in the country, and amongst them, to his late Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, her present Majesty's father, by whom Miss Wilmot, the name by which the claimant was known, had been constantly acknowledged as a relative, and addressed by the familiar and affectionate appellation of cousin. It was also asserted by her, that his Majesty, King George, III., was well aware of these facts, and had by his will recognized the claim of Mrs. Serres, as Olive, Princess of Cumberland, and, as such, bequeathed her a legacy of £15,000.

Having endeavoured, but without success, to establish her right to the rank and property to

which she laid claim, by application to the prerogative court, and some other of the legal tribunals of the country, the Princess Olive, as she styled herself, determined on submitting her case to the consideration of the House of Commons. Accordingly Sir Gerard Noel, who expressed himself satisfied of the justice of her claims, on the 3rd of March presented her petition to the House, and a day was fixed, the 18th of June, for taking it into consideration.

On the subject being brought forward on that day, Mr. Peel, in opposition to the motion for referring the petition to the consideration of a select committee, entered into a detailed statement of facts, for the purpose of shewing the House, that Mrs. Serres was either herself deceived, and the innocent dupe of others, or was practising a most impudent imposition on the public. According to Mr. Peel's statement, there were formerly two brothers of the name of Wilmot, the one Dr. Wilmot, the other Mr. Robert Wilmot; and the person claiming to be Princess of Cumberland, was the daughter of Mr. Robert Wilmot. Proof of her birth and baptism existed, and for a time she was content with this humble origin; but in the year 1817, she discovered that she

was not the daughter of Robert Wilmot, but of his Royal Highness, the late Duke of Cumberland. She did not, indeed, in the first instance, pretend that she was the legitimate, but contented herself with claiming to be the illegitimate child of his Royal Highness. And in 1817, a petition, signed Olive Serres, was presented to the Regent on her behalf, which contained the following passage: "may it please your Royal Highness to attend to the attestations which prove this lady to be the daughter of the late Duke of Cumberland, by a Mrs. Payne, the wife of a Captain in the navy. Mrs. Payne was the sister of Dr. Wilmot, and this lady was born at Warwick, and the attestation of her birth is both signed and sealed by the matron and the medical attendant." Thus, said Mr. Peel, this petition represented her to be the illegitimate daughter of the Duke of Cumberland, but in 1819 she became dissatisfied with this distinction, and then she discovered and produced attestations to prove that she was the legitimate offspring of the Duke of Cumberland, by the daughter of Dr. Wilmot. She alleged that Dr. Wilmot had a daughter who was privately married to the Duke of Cumberland, in 1767; now, it

was well known, that the Duke of Cumberland was, in fact, married in 1769, not to Miss Wilmot, but to Mrs. Horton. Of course, the ground of the petitioners claim was, that the Duke of Cumberland was guilty of having married Mrs. Horton, having two years before been married to Miss Wilmot.

After the death of Lord Warwick, and of every party who could prove the signatures, the petitioner produced several documents to shew that there had been a private marriage, in 1767, and that she was the offspring of that marriage. The marriage at that date would have been legal, the Royal Marriage Act not having then passed. She also produced several papers to account for the secret having been so mysteriously kept, until the year 1819; but none of these papers had been forth coming, until the parties whose signatures they purported to bear, were all dead, even the accoucheur, who attended her mother, died in 1818, a year before the claim was advanced. The attesting witnesses to her documents, were Mr. Dunning, Lord Chatham, and Lord Warwick, and their names were used to prove a secret marriage, and the consequent birth of a child, in 1772, namely Mrs. Serres. To

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Duke of Cumberland, and bred up as my brother Robert's daughter, may be known by a large brown spot, of a liver colour, on her right ribs." The pretended certificate of the marriage, which was dated March the 4th, 1767, was in these words. "I hereby certify, that Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, was this day married to Olive Wilmot, and that such marriage has been legally and duly solemnized, according to the rites and ceremonies of the church of England. It was signed "James Wilmot,"—present "Brook," "J. Adder,"—"G R." was also appended, but for what purpose did not appear. This document was intended to make out, that the marriage was solemnized by James Wilmot, the real uncle of the petitioner. Now, James Wilmot was a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and unfortunately for the petitioner, on that very day, March 4th, 1767, he was resident there; as it appears by the books of the college that he quitted Oxford on the 5th of March, 1767. So much for James Wilmot: the signatures of the late Lord Warwick and of James Adder alone remain to be disposed of. The late Lord, by the paper, appears to have signed 'Brook,' his father being still alive; but, un-

luckily again, the late Lord Warwick, before he succeeded to the title, had always signed 'Greville.' He was so named in the entry of the burial of his wife. His servants knew him only by that title, and by that title his father's property was bequeathed to him. He, Mr. Peel, was in possession of a letter from the present Lord Warwick, stating, that the title of Lord Brook had not been borne by any eldest son but himself. The fabricator of this instrument had therefore been misled by the present practice of the family. As to the signature of "J. Adder," a person had been sent down to Warwick, to enquire if there existed any recollection of such a person; and, by the residents he was rather startled to be informed, that the medical attendant of the Warwick family, certainly was a Dr. Adder. On further investigation, it turned out, however, that the real name of the gentleman was James Haddow; that he came from St. Andrew's, and that the people of Warwick, generally in speaking of Dr. Haddow, had omitted the H in his name altogether, and had substituted an R for the W at the end of it. Here again vulgar pronunciation had misled the framer of this piece of imposture. It was needless to go into a

review of other documents. There was, however, one pretension put forth by the petitioner, on which, he (Mr. Peel) did not wish to throw the least discredit. He held in his hand a manifesto signed "Olive," and claiming the high dignity of Princess of Poland, by virtue of her relationship to Augustus Stanislaus; upon the pretext that the Duke of Cumberland had married Olive, the legitimate daughter of the King of Poland; it concluded in these terms —"Alas! beloved nation of our ancestors, your Olive lives to anticipate the emancipation of Poland. Invite us, beloved people, to the kindom of our ancestors, and the generous humanity and wise policy of the Emperor Alexander will restore the domains of our ancient house." It went on to assure the Poles, that her legitimacy, as Princess of Poland, had been fully proved in England. With her claim to be a Polish Princess, Mr. Peel observed, he had nothing to do, he had not the slightest wish to interfere with it; he was quite satisfied with having shewn that she had no pretensions to that rank in England.

The statement of Mr. Peel carried conviction to the minds of his hearers; the House at once decided that the claim of Mrs. Serres was

founded on imposition, supported by ingenious and extensive forgeries; the motion of Sir Gerard Noel for further enquiry was therefore met by an unanimous negative; but although Mr. Peel succeeded in satisfying those whom he addressed within the House, there were those without the walls, and they not few in number, who were far from being convinced that Mrs. Serres had not a natural claim to a royal descent, though that she had a legal one it was generally admitted was a matter of doubt.

The public business being now disposed of, Ministers determined on putting an end to this eventful session; accordingly, on the 19th of July, the Parliament was prorogued by commission, his Majesty's health not admitting of his going down to the House to deliver the speech in person.

At no period in the history of nations did any country ever present a picture of greater industry, wealth, manufacturing and commercial enterprize than did England at the commencement of the year 1824, upon which we are now entering; nor did any country ever before possess so strong an indirect influence over other states. Our power was not merely

that of fleets and armies, but was of that description which arises from the necessary connection of human societies with each other. This effect no doubt had its origin in the energies of the people, and the character of our institution; but it cannot be denied that much of our prosperity was owing to the wise, liberal, and moderate rule which the government had for some time past adopted; a rule which had enabled the country to exert its energies with much greater effect than it could have done under the restraint of a more narrow minded system of policy. There was in the present year no diminution of the prosperity which had been gradually increasing throughout the whole of 1823. Even the country gentlemen, who are proverbially the most prone to meet difficulties half way, the least accustomed to suffer from uncontrolable changes, and certainly the most incapable of struggling with difficulties, when real difficulties present themselves, had no longer reason to complain. The crisis had passed over, and its effects became each day less perceptible; the prices of all agricultural produce was slowly but steadily on the rise, and this rise in the price was not attended with any inconvenience to the work-

ing classes, in as much as the demand for labour, obtained for them constant employment and high wages.

An abundance of capital led on, at this time, to the formation of numerous joint stock companies, some of them connected with plans of internal and domestic industry—others were less judiciously directed towards speculations in distant countries. The mines of Mexico especially presented a wide and tempting field to the speculators, and three companies, those of the Real del Monte, the United Mexican, and the Anglo Mexican, were formed under the flattering prospects and anticipations amounting almost to certainty on the part of the shareholders of extracting, by means of English capital, machinery, and skill, unbounded wealth from the unexplored mines of the New World. Similar companies were formed in the course of the year for working the mines of Chili, of Brazil, of Peru, and of the Rio de la Plata, and for carrying on the Pearl Fishery on the coast of Columbia; and so great was the spirit of speculation which had sprung up, that in a few weeks, in the early part of the year, some hundreds of propositions, some of them most absurd, were before the public; each of which,

no matter how great their absurdity, found supporters ready to risk their capital in promoting them. Many of the companies which were thus set on foot, were able, or conceived they were able, to prosecute their objects effectually, without deriving any special powers from the Legislature; others of them, and especially those which were to have their operations at home, found it prudent or necessary to apply for private Acts of Parliament, so that in the month of March, there were upwards of thirty Bills before the House of Commons, for the purpose of giving legal existence to different companies of this description.*

In all these speculations only a small instalment, seldom exceeding five per cent, was paid

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* Amongst these were to be found the following. The Alliance Fire and Life Insurance Company, with a capital of five millions. The Palladium, ditto, capital two millions. The British annuity Company, capital three millions. The Thames and Isis Navigation Company, capital £120,000. An Ale Brewery Association, capital £200,000. A company for obtaining from the Government a grant of a million of acres of land in New South Wales, and for improving the growth of wool. An Association for cutting a canal across the Isthmus of Darien. A company for navigating the Thames and Isis by steam. A New Dock Company for coals only, &c.

at first: so that a very moderate rise in the price of the shares produced a large profit on the sum actually invested. Thus, supposing shares of £100, on which £5 was paid, rising to a premium of £40, no uncommon occurrence, this yielded, on every share, a profit of eight times the amount of money paid. This possibility of enormous profit, by risking a trifle, was a bait too tempting to be resisted, and crowds of individuals, of every description—the credulous and the suspicious, the crafty and the bold, the raw and the experienced, the intelligent and the ignorant, princes, nobles and politicians, placemen, patriots, lawyers, physicians, divines, philosophers, poets, together with females of all ranks and degrees, spinsters, wives, and widows, hastened to venture some portion of their property in speculations in which scarcely anything was known except the name.

Whatever might be the opinion of the discerning few with regard to these modes of investing capital, the mania had caught the multitude, and they had the effect of giving, at least a temporary impetus to internal and commercial industry, and caused millions of capital to be brought into circulation which would otherwise have lain dormant. This general

activity and prosperity, accompanied throughout the country by a spirit of order and tranquillity, in every part of the kingdom, with the exception of Ireland, rendered the task of Government extremely easy, and held out to Ministers the prospect of a light session.

Under these propitious circumstances Parliament met, on the 3rd of February. On account of the temporary indisposition of the King, the session was opened by commission. The speech was read by the Lord Chancellor, and the address in reply was agreed to without any serious opposition in either House.

One of the principal subjects which engaged the attention of Parliament was, as usual, the state of Ireland. And on the 11th of May, after several previous discussions on the subject had taken place, Lord Althorpe moved "that a select committee be appointed to enquire into the state of Ireland, and to report their observations and opinions thereon to the House." Sir H. Parnell seconded the motion, which was opposed by Mr. Goulburn, who contended that the motion of the noble Lord was too general; he moved as an amendment to leave out all the words of the original motion after the word "into," and to substitute in their stead the

following—" the nature and extent of the disturbances that have prevailed in the districts of Ireland which are now subject to the operation of the Insurrection Act."

This amendment was supported by Mr. Peel, on the ground that the motion of the noble Lord was too indefinite, and, that should the committee be appointed to take into consideration all the subjects to which Lord Althorpe had adverted, little hope could be entertained that their labours would be attended with any useful result. What were the subjects which the noble Lord wished to have submitted to the committee? The relations between landlord and tenant, the state of the revenue, the whole history of grand jury presentments, the Church establishment, the tithe system, past and present; and above all, the proposition whether what was called the Roman Catholic question was not the origin of all the evils which afflicted Ireland. These were the subjects which the noble Lord wished to persuade the House to refer to a select committee. Was the last question a fit subject to submit to the consideration of a committee of the House?—if it were, why had the House for twenty years past been annually debating it? If the report

of a select committee would settle that important point, why had not such a course been resorted to at an earlier period? But though he was not disposed to go the extent of the noble Lord's motion, he had no objection to the enquiry proposed by the amendment of his Right Honorable friend, to which he should give his support. After a long and tedious debate, Mr. Goulburn's amendment was carried by a majority of 184 to 136.

That grievous evil, the delays of the Court of Chancery at this time, as they had previously and have since done, became in the session of 1824, a subject of discussion in the House of Commons. On the 24th of February, Mr. J. Williams moved for a committee to enquire into the expenses and delays of the Court of Chancery, and the causes of them." In his address on this occasion the learned gentleman commented, in strong terms of invective, on the practice of the Court, and on the conduct of the noble and learned judge who presided in it, Lord Eldon. He cited cases in which, in his opinion, justice had not been administered, though he confessed himself to be, as an advocate, personally and practically, entirely ignorant of the practice of the Court; and of

its delays, he, from experience as a suitor, certainly knew nothing; and whilst he could command the remedy of a pistol he never would. On this occasion, Mr. Peel made an admirable defence of Lord Eldon against the charges brought forward by Mr. Williams, and contended that whatever delay existed in the Court of Chancery arose not from any fault on the part of the judge, but from the great increase of business. Since the time of Lord Hardwicke sixty or seventy years had passed over; in that period the population of the kingdom had nearly doubled, and the wealth of the nation had increased in a similar proportion. The increase in business had more than kept pace with the progress of population and wealth. A great portion of the Lord Chancellor's time was occupied in discussions on lunatic petitions; to show how that branch of business had increased it was only necessary to state that, during the Chancellorship of Lord Hardwicke, from 1737 to 1746, the total number of orders made upon Lunatic petitions was 484. During an equal period of time, ten years, namely from 1801 to 1810. The number of similar orders made by Lord Eldon was 1139, a proportion of nearly 1200 to 500: and in the ten years

from 1814 to 1823, a much larger increase had taken place; the orders on Lunatic petitions during the latter period amounting to no less a number than 2,531.

In the hearing of appeals in the House of Lords, another heavy and important portion of the duties which devolved on the Lord Chancellor. In the period between 1750 and 1760, the number of appeals heard by the Lord Chancellor was 170: in the ten years from 1801 to 1810 the number heard amounted to 492. Again the Commissions of Bankruptcy, another heavy branch of Chancery business; from 1770 to 1779, the average number of commissions yearly was 709; for the last twelve years they had averaged 2000. In the year 1800, the number of Bills filed was 1445, in 1823 the number was 2270.

Another important matter to be observed, was the amount of property belonging to suitors lodged in the name of the Accountant General. In the year 1740, the amount of balance in the hands of the Accountant General was 1,290,000*l.* In 1760, this sum had increased to 3,000,000*l.* In 1780, it was 7,000,000. In 1800, it had increased to 17,000,000*l.* But in 1820, the balance had increased to 34,000,000*l.*

These facts Mr. Peel conceived furnished conclusive proofs, that during the present Chancellorship, the business of Chancery had increased four or five fold. In this state of things, he was of opinion, that great benefit might result from an enquiry into the subject; but such an enquiry he thought would be better prosecuted by a commission composed of individuals of high legal attainments and reputation than by a committee of that House. Such a commission, the Lord Chancellor had recommended, and it was the intention of the Ministry to adopt the recommendation. He should therefore oppose the motion.

Mr. Williams ultimately withdrew his motion. Shortly afterwards Commissioners were appointed to enquire into the proceedings of the Court of Chancery. The Commissioners were, the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, the Vice Chancellor, together with some of the Masters in Chancery—Chancery Barristers, and members of the House of Commons.

On the 25th of June the session terminated; the King going down to the House in person, and delivering a speech from the throne.

The autumn of the year, 1824, passed over

be stated, that some of these projects had derived fresh popularity from, and the general satisfaction with the measures of Government was much increased by, an important step which was adopted at this time in fixing the foreign relations of the country.

The measure here alluded to is a formal communication, made by Mr. Canning, in his capacity of Foreign Secretary, to the ministers of Foreign powers, accredited to our court, to the following effect, "That in consequence of the repeated failures of the applications of his Majesty's Government, to the court of Spain, relative to the recognition of the Independent States of South America, his Majesty has come to a determination, to appoint Chargés des Affaires to the States of Columbia, Mexico, and Buenos Ayres; and to enter into treaties of commerce, with those respective States on the basis of the recognition of their independence." This measure, beneficial and popular in itself, was the more acceptable, because it was justly deemed prophetic of the course which would be adopted with regard to Guatemala, Chili, and Peru, as soon as stable Governments should be established in those countries.

Such was the state of the country at the

meeting of Parliament, on the 3rd of February, 1825. The session was opened by commission, the commissioners being the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Westmoreland, the Earl of Harrowby, and the Earl of Shaftesbury. The speech embraced the usual topics, and the address in the Lords was moved by Lord Dudley and Ward and seconded by Lord Gort. In the Commons, the mover was Lord Francis Leveson Gower, and the seconder Mr. Alderman Thompson; and after the usual portion of speaking, the address was unanimously agreed to in both Houses.

The recommendation contained in the speech delivered by the Lords Commissioners, relative to Ireland, and especially as regarded the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Association, induced both Houses to give that subject their earliest consideration. Accordingly on the second day of the session, Mr. Goulburn gave notice that "he would on the 10th of February, move for leave to bring in a Bill to amend certain acts relating to unlawful societies in Ireland." On this notice being given by the Right Hon. Secretary, Mr. Brougham urged strongly a delay of a fortnight in bringing it forward; Mr. Goulburn, however, declared he could not

accede to the Honorable gentleman's request; upon which Mr. Brougham moved, that the House should be called over on the day fixed by Mr. Goulburn for his motion. On the day fixed, the 10th, there was a very full attendance of members, and the debate was opened by Mr. Goulburn, who stated the grounds on which he had considered it necessary to adopt such a measure as that he was about to propose. He then entered at considerable length into a review of the then existing state of Ireland, and his views on the subject, and in conclusion, moved for leave to bring in a bill in the terms mentioned in his notice.

The motion was opposed by Mr. J. Smith, Sir H. Parnell, and Mr. John Williams; and supported by Mr. Leslie Foster. Mr. Secretary Peel then rose, and addressed the House in support of the motion. "The Association in its first principles, he contended, was an interference with public justice. This opinion, he said, had been repeatedly expressed by members now sitting on the other side of the House, in the discussions which had taken place on the subject, during the last session. Mr. Peel now contended that every one who had contributed a single farthing to the Association, had dis-

qualified himself from sitting on a jury under any prosecution in which the Association might be interested, inasmuch as by becoming a subscriber to such an Association he had given strong and incontrovertible proof that he was not an impartial person as to the question which he would have to try. They had been told that every peasant in Ireland was a member of the Association; if it were so, was not justice likely to be tainted in its administration, when nearly every person qualified to sit on a common jury was disqualified by his own act? did not such a system neutralize and render null the various benefits which Parliament had recently conferred upon the Catholics of Ireland? Parliament had lately enabled them to act as jurors, and grand jurors; and yet here was an act of their own body, which went to set their right aside; this he contended again, was the effect produced by their subscribing a single farthing to the Catholic rent. Suppose, for instance, that an offence which involved a party question, and excited party animosity came on for trial; in what a situation would the court be placed? How could a panel be formed of parties perfectly indifferent, when all were influenced by a feeling in favor of one

side of the question. The objection was not merely to the evil, in any particular case, but to the taint which was thus cast on the administration of justice generally. He would cite one case to prove that his opinion as to the proceedings of the Association, being an interference with the course of justice, was not an incorrect one. It appeared that on the Wednesday preceding the day on which he was speaking, a meeting of the Catholic Association was held, when a report was made of the case of one John Cahil, and a magistrate, the Rev. Allan Cavendish. Here then, was a body with large funds at its disposal, which it expended in instituting an enquiry previous to trial, and which brought in its report declaratory of the party's guilt or innocence, before it even placed him on his defence. In the present instance, the committee had even done more than make a report, declaring the guilt of Mr. Cavendish; for the conclusion they had come to was, that a memorial should be presented to the Lord Lieutenant, on the subject of that gentleman's improper and illegal conduct. Nay, more, the gentleman who brought in the report, actually moved, that the action in the case of Cahil should be defended at the expence of

the Association; and that a petition should be presented to Parliament praying that Mr. Cavendish might be removed, as being an unfit person to act as a magistrate. "The Association," said Mr. Peel, "if its aim were justice, might at least have postponed the petition to Parliament till after the conclusion of the judicial enquiry. But no—at the self same moment, the Association published the memorial, and sent the magistrate to trial, not only with the disadvantages of a previous condemnation, but also with the disadvantage of having it known that a petition was to be presented to Parliament against him. He, Mr. Peel, had no means of knowing any thing of the merits of this transaction, except from a letter of the Earl of Donoughmore on the subject, which a gentleman had read to the Association. In that letter Lord Donoughmore declared, that, as governor of the county, he had looked into the charges preferred against Mr. Cavendish, and had found them groundless; that the Lord Chancellor had not only acquitted Mr. Cavendish of the charges brought against him, but had applauded his conduct on the very grounds intended to criminate him. And that he considered the further prosecution of

that gentleman as an act of oppression on the part of the Association. Now, when such was the opinion of a nobleman, who had always been friendly to the Catholics, was it to be expected that the gentlemen of Ireland would undertake the duties of the magistracy, if they were to be liable to such attacks in the performance of them?

Mr. Peel proceeded, in the second place, to examine the political character of the Association. Here was a body, which had now been in existence more than a year, under the pretence of preparing a petition to Parliament from the Catholics. This body imitated, or rather travestied all the proceedings of that House, a matter of little importance in itself, but which, combined with others, assumed a certain degree of consequence. It separated in summer, as the House of Commons did. It met again in the month of October, and it had been sitting ever since. It possessed also a complete organization throughout the country; an organization, which, if it were not for the purposes of mischief, at least was calculated to excite suspicion. The spirit of our constitution was founded on suspicion; and he had a right to assume that this body, though it might not

intend evil, at present, might be turned to it at some future period. They had their agent in every parish, and their correspondent in every town. Their intentions might be good, but with such machinery how easily might they be converted into an engine of the greatest mischief. Was it not a fit subject of jealousy when it was found that they had instituted committees of finance, of grievances, of education? The assumption of such powers was inconsistent with public liberty, and ought, therefore, to be put down without delay. The House was accustomed to admire the popular part of our constitution; and justly, for the checks by which it was guarded were extremely wise. It held its deliberations under the will of the Crown, which could suspend them at any moment. No such check existed upon the Catholic Association, which held its meetings in no definite place, and was free from all controul, as to their time of duration. The House never instituted a criminal prosecution without great precaution, and always with the consent of the crown, to which it previously sent an address: the House, too, always guarded against bearing down an individual by its weight; but no such scruple existed in the minds of the

members of the association; it was under no control as to the prosecutions it instituted, and even went deliberately to create prejudices against the accused, by distributing ex-parte statements of the evidence to be produced against him. In that House they were not accustomed to vote away money to an individual, without a committee being appointed to examine into his claims to remuneration. The Catholic Association, on the contrary, voted away money at will, without any restrictions, and thus arrogated to itself powers possessed by no other body in the kingdom. What would be the consequence of establishing the principle upon which this assumed power was founded? Why the establishment of counter associations in all directions, by individuals for their own protection. The country would, in consequence, be filled with dismay, confusion, and anarchy; for if Parliament would not provide protection for individuals they would very soon provide it for themselves. Therefore, with reference both to the political mischief and to the corruption of the administration of justice which this association was calculated to create, the House was bound to apply the remedy which had that evening been proposed."

The discussion upon this question extended to a fourth night's debate: at the conclusion of the fourth evening the house divided—for Mr. Goulburn's motion 278; against it 123. Leave was accordingly given to bring in the Bill.

The protraction of the debate to such an unusual length was the work of the minority: their object was probably two-fold. First to impress the public mind with an exaggerated opinion of the importance of the question; and secondly to afford the association an opportunity of meeting and opposing the Bill in its earliest stages.

The proceedings in Parliament made the more thinking portion of the Catholic population of Ireland feel that they had gone too far, and at a meeting of their delegates, held in London, it was resolved that no more money should be raised under the denomination of Catholic rent, but that contributions under the name of British Catholic Free Gifts, should still be received.

On the 17th of February, Mr. Brougham presented a petition, numerously signed, by members of the association, against the Bill, and on the same night the learned gentleman moved "that the Roman Catholic Association

should be heard by themselves, their counsel or agents against the Bill, and witnesses be examined at the bar of the House!" The motion was opposed by Mr. Peel in a very able appeal to the House, and as ably supported by Mr. Brougham, and, after an animated debate, Mr. Brougham's motion was negatived by a majority of 222 to 89.

The second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of 253 to 107 ; and the third reading by 226 to 96. The measure passed the Lords, by majorities equally overwhelming, and on the 9th of March received the Royal assent.

The Catholic Association did not attempt to resist the law, but submitted and expired without a struggle.

In all the discussions relative to the Catholic Association, the supporters of the government measure had been especially careful to separate that question from the general one of Catholic Emancipation. Indeed, the charge made by many of the friends of that measure was, that the violence of the Association had greatly injured the Catholic Cause. The condemnation of Mr. O'Connell and his companions in the Association, although it drew down the heavy con-

demnation of all well disposed and peaceable persons, did not greatly affect the question of Emancipation; on the contrary, it was now deemed to be in a better position than it had been for some years past. The ranks of its friends had been strengthened by the adhesion of several persons of distinction and influence, who had deserted from the array of its enemies. Amongst the new friends and supporters which the Claims of the Catholics had thus acquired, Mr. Brownlow was not the least important; but the principal advantage which the Catholics had to boast, was to be found in the increasing influence and popularity of Mr. Canning and the other members of the Cabinet, who were favorable to their Claims. The question was, this session, brought forward under a form very different to that in which it had formerly been presented to the House. It was now to be made the subject of three distinct measures; namely, one to remove the Catholic disabilities; a second to establish a species of connection between the Catholic Ecclesiastics and the state, by making a public provision for the Clergy of that church; and the third, with a view of preventing the Protestants from being overpowered in elections by the overwhelming

majority of the Catholic population, proposed to increase considerably, the yearly value of the freehold to which the elective franchise was annexed.

On the 1st of March, Sir Francis Burdett presented the general petition of the Catholics to the House, and in a temperate, moderate, though eloquent speech, moved for the appointment of a committee of the whole House, to consider of the state of the existing laws affecting his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects. The motion was seconded by Mr. Croker, and supported by Mr. Canning, Mr. S. Wortley, Mr. Plunkett, and Mr. Brougham; and opposed by Mr. Leslie Foster, the Solicitor General, Mr. Banks, and Mr. Peel. The Right Honorable gentleman contended, that the Catholics could not assert any claim of right to the concessions for which they now called. "The Honorable Baronet tells us," observed Mr. Peel, "that he has never heard what the danger is which would attend making this concession, and he calls upon his opponents to point it out. Before I answer this call, I wish to ask of the Honorable Baronet what is the object of his present proposition? I presume that the object is, to communicate power

to those who are at present excluded from it—to devolve upon them a fair share of the framing, administering, and execution of the laws. Does the Honorable Baronet mean to give a mere barren capacity, never hereafter to be available? If the two Houses of Parliament mean to pass a measure of this kind, surely there can be nothing more unfair than to throw the odium of refusal of office elsewhere, and to create an unjust impression against the highest personage in the realm. Parliament ought not to give the claimants a ticket of admission, and when it is presented at the door of the constitution, trust to the crown to shut that door in the face of the party claiming a right to be allowed to enter.

"If I were perfectly satisfied that concession would lead to the restoration of peace and harmony, and put an end to animosities, the existence of which all lament, I, for one, would not oppose the measure on a mere theory of the constitution, when consent would secure such immense practical advantages. But, because I doubt whether the removal of disabilities on the conditions proposed, will promote tranquillity in Ireland, or lessen religious animosities; and, because I think you cannot

safely remove the disabilities, I am disposed to continue the exclusion. Are these disabilities the cause of the disorders which have so long existed in Ireland? As far as actual commotion is concerned, the disorders have no such origin. In the province of Ulster, where the numbers of the Catholics and Protestants are so nearly balanced, the Insurrection Act has not, in a single instance, been enforced. In 1792, the Roman Catholics came forward, and asked to be rendered capable of holding the office of Magistrates, and of enjoying the elective franchise. They wanted, they said, nothing more, and those persons calumniated them greatly, who said, that their wishes went further.

"The elective franchise was conceded even more fully than they requested it; and Roman Catholics were permitted to serve as well on grand juries, as on petty juries. Since these concessions, has there been any diminution of party feeling and factious animosities? I think not. But the answer of the supporters of this proposition will be "While you retain any thing—while you refuse to put both parties on an entire equality, the evil will continue; but as soon as they are equal it will cease." Admitting this for a moment, will the concession

now claimed put them on an entire equality? What is claimed is a mere capacity or eligibility for office, and after you have granted that, will you be able to concede what the Roman Catholics will consider a just distribution of office. Will not the distinction thus necessarily drawn, be infinitely more galling and mortifying, since it will be reduced to a mere personal exclusion. When vacancies occur, if a Protestant were preferred to a Catholic would it not constantly expose the Government to jealousy and reproach? The respective numbers of the Catholics and the Protestants of Ireland may be 4,200,000, and 1,800,000, but notwithstanding this disproportion, the property in the hands of the Protestants is at least as twenty to one. Now after equal capacity of office has been given to all, the religion of the great minority is to remain the religion of the state. Is it then perfectly safe in Ireland to admit the professors of all religions to the enjoyment of the same privileges? and after this has been accomplished, the Protestant Church is still to be retained; I know several Honorable members, and among them the member for Montrose, (Mr. Hume) who contend that it is impossible. On this

point he agrees with me; for over and over again he has argued, that it is a mere mockery to suppose that the Roman Catholics will be satisfied with a Protestant Church establishment. They will be constantly endeavouring to recover the power they have lost, by overturning a system which they view with other eyes than ours. The Catholic is to be admitted without restriction into Parliament, and into office; provided the King approves of him. He is to be as perfectly free as we are ourselves, unfettered by any restrictions; and at liberty to pursue what he conceives to be the interests of his country, and the justice of his cause, with perfect freedom. He comes into this House sincerely attached to the religion in which he has been educated; he has all the influence which his personal character gives him; he is placed at the head of a party. Is the Crown to say, "although you are a man of powerful abilities, yet I must shut you out?" After you have capacitated him to become Secretary of State, or first Lord of the Treasury, is the Crown to turn round and say, "I cannot admit you." Is that the way to conciliate such a man? But suppose the Crown employs him in its service—in what a situation do you place

him? Can he exercise a sound discretion, in regard to those measures which relate to the safety of the church of England? It appears to me, he cannot give a safe judgment on such questions, and therefore I am for excluding him; and not imposing on the Crown the ungracious task of refusing the ticket of admission you have given him."

Sir Francis Burdett's motion was carried by a majority of 247 to 237. On the 23rd of March, the Bill was introduced by Sir Francis Burdett and read a first time.—On the 19th of April, the second reading was carried on a division by 268 to 241.

In the debate on the second reading Mr. Peel again stated his objections to the measure. He confessed he was surprised at the two first clauses in the preamble—"Whereas the Protestant succession to the imperial Crown of this United Kingdom and its dependencies is, by the act for the further limitation of the Crown, and the better securing the liberties of the subject, established permanently and inviolably; and whereas the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, discipline, and government thereof, and likewise the Protestant Presbyterian

Church of Scotland, and the doctrine, discipline, and government thereof, are, by the respective acts of union between England and Scotland, and between Great Britain and Ireland therein severally established, permanently and inviolably." Now why, he would ask, were these two clauses introduced into the preamble? There was no clause in the Bill which provided for the permanent and inviolable security of the Protestant Establishment. These clauses had some connexion with the first Bill introduced by the late Mr. Grattan; for they were there followed by a third clause to this effect: —"and whereas it would tend to promote the interest of the same, and strengthen our free constitution, of which they are an essential part, if the civil and military disqualifications under which his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects now labour were removed." That clause was omitted in the present Bill; for to say that the privileges which it conferred upon the Catholics were intended to promote the interests of the Church of England, and to strengthen our free constitution, would be an absurdity too great for any man to believe. In the feast of Macbeth, that tyrant, before he went round the table to pay his respects to his

guests, expressed an anxiety for the presence of Banquo, whom he had doomed to die; and one of the commentators on Shakespeare had remarked that this single touch of nature showed a greater consciousness of guilt in Macbeth's mind, and excited a stronger suspicion that he had intended mischief to Banquo than a thousand laboured speeches would have done. So he (Mr. Peel) thought that the anxiety for the welfare of the Church of England exhibited in the preamble, and not followed up in any of the enactments of the Bill, was one of those touches of nature which showed a consciousness of danger in the bosoms of the framers of the Bill; and which ought to excite a lurking suspicion that all was not so correct in it as at first sight it might appear to be. * * * *

"His Right Honorable friend (Mr. Canning) had always disclaimed anything like negociation with the Catholics, and had said, he would legislate for them, not treat with them. But what had been the course pursued during the last ten years? What was the history of the securities which were to accompany the relief to the Catholics? The first security which was offered was the Veto. Such a security existed in every Protestant State in Europe.

And was it not enough to excite surprise, to find in this Protestant Kingdom, for so it was designated in the Bill of Rights, the Crown called upon to pay the professors of religion, in the appointment of whom it was denied any influence? but thus it was; and any attempt of the Protestants to legislate on the subject was termed bigotry. The Veto was abandoned, and in 1821, his Right Honorable friend produced those securities, which he, no doubt, thought adequate on the one hand, and necessary on the other. On looking for those securities now, however, they were no where to be found. They had been entirely done away with, and others substituted. The securities having thus grown,

"Small by degrees and beautifully less."

were now become so exceedingly minute, that they could not well be reduced any further in size. They had sunk below Zero, and had become almost too minute for calculation. So insignificant were they at present, that he implored his Right Honorable friend to leave them out of the Bill altogether. They were told, indeed, that the question of securities

could only be properly considered in the committee; on this point he would say, that if the great measure were once conceded, he would infinitely rather place all its details upon a principle of generous confidence, than fetter them with a jealous and ineffectual system of restriction."

On the 10th of May the third reading of the bill took place, the motion having been carried by a majority of 21; the numbers being, for the third reading, 248; against it, 227. The bill was then read a third time and sent up to the Lords.

The first reading of the bill passed *sub silentio*, but on the motion for the second reading a long debate took place, and on a division, the numbers were, for the second reading, 130; against it, 178. The bill was therefore rejected by a majority of 48 votes. By this decision the question of the Catholic Claims was set at rest for another year.

During the session of 1825, none of the great questions of constitutional law, on which at times it has been more than once contended, that the very existence of the country was represented as depending, were discussed. Parliamentary Reform was allowed to rest, and

no part of the country expressed the slightest symptoms of dissatisfaction at that important subject not being agitated. The attention of Parliament was, however, directed to points much more nearly connected with the public good; to the improvement of the mode of administering justice between man and man.

The administration of justice in the Court of Chancery is, perhaps, by far the most important subject connected with the judicial institutions of the country which can ever be brought under the consideration of the legislature; nor can any greater benefit be conferred upon the public than the adoption of any improvement in the system of a tribunal in its principles so far superior to all others which have ever existed in this or any other country, although many and great, undoubtedly, are the evils which, in the progress of time, and under change of circumstances, have, at different periods, crept into its practice in detail. As a Court of equity, both in the practical efficacy of its operations, in the comprehensiveness of its range, and in the enlarged and liberal doctrines upon which it acts, it is without a parallel. The Courts of Common Law may justly be classed among the most useful and excellent of human institutions

within their own sphere; but if their powers and privileges, their doctrines and forms, were not modified by the equitable jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery they would cease to be instruments of justice, and would become intolerable nuisances, by the oppression and wrong which they might be made to work. The Court of Law looks only at so much of a transaction as falls within its own arbitrary definitions though there may be circumstances belonging to the particular case, though not comprehended in those definitions, which may entirely alter its nature; but these a court of law cannot look at or deal with, though an equitable jurisdiction can grapple with them without difficulty.

Looking at the vast variety, and complicated nature of the transactions, with which the Court of Chancery has to deal, it would be wonderful indeed if in so vast a system there was not much in which improvement might be effected. With a view to this improvement a commission of enquiry was appointed in 1824, but that commission had not yet reported the result of its enquires. Notwithstanding this, two discussions on the subject, one brought forward by Mr. J. Williams, on the 31st of

May; and the other, on the 7th of June, by Sir Francis Burdett, had taken place during the present session, 1825, in the House of Commons. The motion of Mr. Williams was almost entirely confined to an attack upon the learned and venerable judge who presided over that court, Lord Elden; the motion was negatived.

That of Sir F. Burdett, was for "printing the evidence taken by the commissioners appointed to enquire into the practice of the Court of Chancery." This motion was opposed by Mr. Peel, on the ground, that to print the evidence without the accompanying report was contrary to the practice of the House; and even if it were printed, the session was so far advanced, that no measure respecting it could be brought forward until the next session. The motion was ultimately rejected by 154 to 73.

A bill of very great importance, as regarded our judicial proceedings was introduced at an early period of the session by Mr. Peel, and adopted. That was a "bill for consolidating and amending the laws relative to the appointment of jurors." Of the alterations effected in the existing laws, the most important were the

regulations with respect to special jurors. It was required that, in future, in all cases where the Crown was either a real or a nominal plaintiff, the special jurors should be selected by ballot; and in all criminal proceedings tried by special juries, the same regulations were to be observed. In civil cases, where there was a consent in writing on both sides, which written consent was afterwards to be received as evidence of the agreement between the parties, special juries were to be selected in the same manner as had been previously done.

Another measure connected with our judicial code was also introduced, and perfected by Mr. Peel during the session of 1825. The Bankrupt Laws were consolidated into one Act, and in effecting this object, some important alterations and improvements were introduced. An Act was also passed for amending the laws relating to agents and factors.

On the 6th of July, the session was terminated by commission; the state of his Majesty's health not admitting of his going down to the House to deliver the speech in person.

The commencement of the year 1826, was marked by a continuance of that depression in the manufactures and commerce of the country,

which prevailed in the latter part of the preceding year. The demand for labour had not yet revived, and want of employment, with its attendant miseries and distress, was the necessary result. Private credit was yet in a very unsettled state; the failures of private banking establishments, as well in the metropolis as in the country, continued rather to increase than diminish; and the universal distrust which existed by limiting the facilities of obtaining discounts and loans, tended to deprive commercial men of their accustomed aids, and much increased the difficulties of the fair trader. The distress was in fact general, and doubts and difficulties threw a gloom over the manufacturing, the trading, and the moneyed interests of the country.

Such was the state of things when Parliament met on the 2nd of February, 1826. The speech which was delivered by commission, alluded to the existence of general distress, and strongly recommended parliament to direct its immediate and serious attention to the subject, and to the devising some mode of relief. One measure suggested by his Majesty in the speech, was, the adopting some plan with regard to the currency and circulating medium of the coun-

try; which by placing our moneytary system on a firmer basis, might protect both public and private interests against those sudden and violent fluctuations, which had mainly contributed to create the difficulties under which the country then laboured. The effect of this recommendation was the introduction of a Bill to prohibit the circulation of small notes—that is notes under £5.—by country bankers; in the progress of the Bill, the prohibition was extended to the Bank of England. The Bill was strenuously supported by Mr. Peel, Mr. Huskisson, and Mr. Canning; and after several protracted discussions, was adopted in a House consisting of 270 members, by a majority of 232. The measure also passed through the Lords by large majorities.

This session was distinguished, as regarded Mr. Peel's Parliamentary life, by renewed efforts on his part to effect a simplification and improvement of the criminal code. Already had his labours on this subject been productive of very beneficial results; but on the present occasion they took a more extensive range, and aimed at more important alterations than any which had yet been attempted. With that view, on the 9th of March, 1826, he introduced

a Bill to consolidate the various acts, which literally encumbered the statute book, frequently contradicting each other, and serving only to confuse, and not unfrequently to mislead those whose duty it was to administer them. The class of statutes here alluded to are those which relate to offences against property. The number of persons, he said, who came under their operation yearly, was scarcely credible. In 1825, no less than 14,437 individuals had been charged with different offences, and of these, 12,530 had been committed for the crime of theft. During the previous seven years from the time he was speaking, 247 prisoners had been tried for forgery, 111 for murder, 50 for arson, and 43 for perjury; but the number of those who had been tried for larceny during that period exceeded 48,000. To simplify, therefore, the statutes which formed the law relating to such an offence was an important object. These amounted to 92 in number, and provisions regarding theft were frequently found mixed up with other matters among which no one would think of looking for them. Thus a law providing for the better preservation of hollies, quicksets, &c., was comprised in an act, passed to provide for the better collection of

his Majesty's Customs, and for the regulation of Custom House officers in Senegambia. A clause providing punishment for another penal offence was contained in an act for the importation of a description of barley called bigg. He had now collected the scattered mass, and compressed the whole of these enactments in a Bill consisting of only thirty-two pages. By a single clause he should get rid of twelve statutes against theft. One Act was directed against the receivers of stolen lead, iron, or brass; another against the receivers of stolen pewter; and a third against the receivers of stolen bank notes, and so on. He should simply substitute for them a single provision, making the receiving any money, goods, chattels, bill, or security, a felony, and the party guilty to be indictable as a principal, or as an accessory after the fact. In the law, as it related to accessories, he also should have to propose some important alterations. That they were required, he thought would be apparent from the statement of a single fact. Two persons concerned in a burglary, lately committed at Earl Cowper's residence in Hertfordshire, from whence upwards of £2,000 of property had been stolen, were tried and executed for the offence; but one man, who had been an accessory, escaped,

in consequence of its having been found impossible to try him in Hertfordshire; he was indeed subsequently convicted at the Surrey Assizes, but it was at an expense of £426. As the law then stood, to commit a robbery in a ready furnished lodging was a high crime; and a trespass on a river running through a gentleman's estate was a grievous offence; but to commit a robbery in unfurnished lodgings, or a trespass on a boundary stream was no offence at all. In the same way it was larceny to steal the securities for property vested in our own funds, but it was no crime to steal the securities for property vested in the foreign funds. He intended to place both properties on the same footing. Mr. Peel entered into numerous similar details, and pointed out other errors, which he was desirous of amending, in the law, and omissions which he wished to supply, and concluded by moving for leave to bring in a Bill. Leave was given, and the Bill was brought in, but not carried through during that session, Mr. Peel stating that, from the multiplicity of objects which it comprehended, and the very minute nature of the details, it was necessary to proceed in it with the most cautious deliberation.

Another Bill was also introduced by Mr. Peel

at this time, and which passed during the session, having for its object the removal of certain inconveniences belonging to the administration of the Criminal Law generally, and in particular, the amendment of the existing regulations, relative to admitting parties to bail in cases of felony. "Considering," observed the Home Secretary, "the great number of persons committed on charges of felony, and the large proportion of them ultimately discharged, either from the insufficiency of evidence or for other reasons, he could not but think it proper that under sufficient safeguards, the powers of magistrates to admit to bail ought to be extended. An alteration of the existing system was desirable, not only as it affected the liberty of individuals, but because a man never came out of prison so good a member of society as he was previous to his committal. At present, no discretion was left to the magistrate; he was bound to commit on every charge of felony; and, therefore, it was, that he should propose to enact that, when a prisoner was taken before one or more magistrates, on a charge of felony, supported by positive and "*credible*" evidence, or such as, if not contradicted, would establish his guilt, he should be committed by the said

justice or justices; but that, if the prisoner were taken before one magistrate only, and the evidence produced was not sufficient to raise a presumption of his guilt, the magistrate should remand him until he could be brought before two or more justices; and if, on taking the prisoner before them, the evidence produced was not sufficient to raise a presumption of his guilt, though it might be of such a nature as to require judicial investigation, they should be empowered to admit him to bail; it was well known that the Court of King's Bench was authorized to admit parties to bail under the circumstances stated by him, but the expense was so great, and particularly in remote parts of the country, that relief from that court could hardly be said to be within the reach of the poor."

The proposal for allowing the prisoner's counsel to address the jury upon evidence in cases of felony, which had been so frequently but unsuccessfully contended for, was on this occasion again brought forward by Mr. Lamb, and supported by Mr. Williams, Mr. Twiss, Mr. Scarlett, Mr. Brougham, and Mr. Denman, and opposed by Mr. Peel, Mr. Canning, the Attorney and Solicitor General and Mr.

Tyndal. Mr. Peel admitted that the arguments which might be raised on both sides of this question were very equally poised; that the legal opinions upon it were nearly equiponderant; and that if he were convinced of the alteration being fitting and useful in itself, he would not oppose to it, merely the antiquity of the law which it was intended to change. If the allowance of counsel would lead to the better explication of the truth, or if there existed any general impression that, from counsel not being allowed, the law was not duly administered, there would be an end to the question; but he had, from his official situation, as ample means as any member of that House, of learning the feelings of the country on such a topic; and his experience led him to the conclusion that justice was most satisfactorily administered.

He had, indeed, no recollection that in any petition presented to him, on behalf of a convict, the ground taken up was his not having been allowed counsel. Prisoners frequently complained that their solicitors had omitted to call proper evidence, or that the witnesses on whom they relied, were not forthcoming, or that they had not had sufficient notice of the

facts with which they had been charged, to be enabled to disprove them; but in no instance did he recollect of any hardship being imputed to the want of counsel. The common law of the country required the unanimous verdict of a jury to convict a prisoner. This necessity of unanimity was an an immense protection to the accused, and it destroyed, at the same time, the argument drawn from the example of Scotland. There unanimity in the jury was not required; their verdict was decided by a majority, so that a single voice might determine on the life of the party charged. Thinking that justice was properly and fairly administered, and very mainly, as respected prisoners charged with felonies, by reason of this peculiar feature in the constitution of juries, he, for one, was very unwilling to risk a change of the system.

On a divison, 36 members voted for Mr. Lamb's motion, and 105 against it.

Excepting the relaxation of the Navigation Laws, in favour of the New States of South America, and incidental remarks on the progress of the insurrection in Greece: the only measure regarding our relations with Fereign States, which occupied the attention of Parliament, was the expiring of the Alien Act. During

this session, that unpopular Act was suffered to die a natural death. In introducing a milder Act, and new regulations, which conferred no power on the Government, of sending aliens out of the country. Mr. Peel, observed that, in relinquishing the power which that Act had bestowed, he had the gratifying reflection that in no instance had it been abused. The only case in which it had been put in force, during the year, was one which bore not the slightest shade of a political aspect. It was that of a man who had menaced a Foreign Ambassador; and who there was the best reason for presuming, would have carried his threats into execution, had he not been brought before the Privy Council, and dealt with under the provisions of this Act. With the exception of that single case, the powers which had been confided to him, under the Act, had not only not been abused, but they had not been used. He had also the satisfaction of stating that in addition to the Act remaining inoperative in his own hands, it had never been used for the purpose of annoyance by those in subordinate situations. He could also bear testimony to the excellent conduct of the Foreigners resident in this country; had it not been for such dis-

cretion on their parts, the House and the country would have been deprived of the pleasure they would now derive, from the repeal of the Alien Act, and the substitution of a measure so mild and unobjectionable as that he was about to propose.

"The new Act, Mr. Peel said, required every alien resident within the kingdom at the time of its passing, to transmit to the Alien Office, within fourteen days, a written declaration of his name, rank, occupation, the country from which he last came, and how long he had been in this country, accompanied, in the case of domestic servants, with the name and abode of their masters. An alien arriving after the commencement of the act would be required to make a similar declaration, and to deliver up his passport to the chief officer of the Customs, at the port where he landed, with the name of the place to which he intended to go, and the names and places of abode of any person to whom he might be known. He would then receive a certificate from the Customs, and the declaration, passport, and copy of the certificate are to be transmitted to the Alien Office. When they were received, a new certificate would be issued to the Alien; and should he

afterwards be found without that certificate, he would be subject to a penalty of £20. If about to leave the kingdom, he must make a declaration to that effect, at the port of departure, and his passport would then be returned to him. If he neglected to make the necessary declarations, or made false ones, he would be liable to a fine of £50, or an imprisonment for not longer than six months, on conviction before two justices. This was all the Act would require, and seven years residence would exempt the alien from the observance of this Act altogether. No fee whatever would be demanded or taken for the certificate. This Bill was after some discussion passed by a large majority.

The petition was then allowed to be read; but Mr. Hume's subsequent proposal, that it should be printed, was rejected by acclamation.

On the 13th of December, the pressing business which required the Parliament to meet before Christmas having been disposed of, the House adjourned to the 8th of February following.

The session of Parliament was somewhat curtailed of its usual length, by the approach of that period, at which a dissolution must as a

matter of course take place. On the 31st of May, its sixth and last session terminated.

The Royal speech was delivered by commission. Parliament was prorogued, and on the 2nd of June it was dissolved by proclamation. The writs issued for the election were made returnable on the 25th of July following.

The elections which followed the dissolution of June, 1826, though they presented some few spirited contests, did not generally possess that interest which usually characterize a period of such universal excitement. Indeed, on this occasion, it was felt, that parties were not so nearly balanced as to lead men to anticipate any political change from the result of the elections. The Ministry were so firmly established that no one entertained the slightest expectation of making any reduction in the majorities, by which their measures had for some time past been sanctioned. The topics seized on by candidates, as those on which to found their hustings harangues, were the Corn Laws, Catholic Emancipation, and the Slave Trade. As the lower classes generally laboured under the impression that the price of their food was greatly increased by the operation of the Corn Law System, which tended only to

enrich the landowner, to declare an opinion in favor of their abolition, could not fail to obtain the applause of the multitude when put forth from the hustings. It was, however, worthy of remark, that even where the popular candidates found it expedient to express their sentiments on the subject, they seldom expressed any specific hostility against the landowner, or gave any direct plan to keep food cheap, but confined themselves to vague and unmeaning promises of supporting such measures as would be equally for the advantage of the grower and the consumer.

At Liverpool, an attempt was made to get up an opposition to Mr. Huskisson, on the plea that the mercantile policy of that gentleman, and of the Cabinet to which he belonged, had injured the manufactures of the country, and the trade of Liverpool in particular; but those who expressed that opinion failed in obtaining a candidate professing the same opinion as themselves. The opposition, therefore, fell to the ground, and Mr. Huskisson was returned. Sir F. Burdett and Mr. Hobhouse were again returned for Westminster, without opposition; Sir Robert Wilson was also elected for the Borough, though not without encountering

strong opposition. Mr. Brougham once more tried Westmoreland, with the Lowther family, and was after a severe struggle defeated. In Northumberland, Lord Lowther and Mr. Beaumont again presented themselves, and were both defeated. Cobbett on this occasion, stood for Preston, where he obtained upwards of a thousand supporters; and Hunt, once a dangerous demagogue, inasmuch as the power and inclination to excite confusion, makes a man dangerous; but whose fame, had at this time, sunk into that of a very successful manufacturer of blacking, had the effrontery to start for the county of Somerset, in special opposition to Sir Thomas Lethbridge, and to retire from his defeat, announcing that he would on every opportunity repeat the experiment till it succeeded.

Mr. Peel was re-elected for the University of Oxford without opposition.

The pressure of public business caused Parliament to assemble on the 14th of November, on which day about one hundred of the new members assembled at the bar of the House of Lords, when the Lord Chancellor, by the command of his Majesty, recommended that they should return to their own House and

choose their Speaker, and after having done so to present the person so chosen for his Majesty's approbation on the following day. On returning to their House, Mr. Manners Sutton was, on the motion of Mr. Sturges Bourn, unanimously re-elected to the chair. The swearing in of members occupied the House until the 21st instant, on which day his Majesty went down in state to the House, and opened the session in person, with a speech from the throne.

In the course of the short session which followed, a person of the name of Taylor, who described himself as "Reverend," holding, or having held a cure in the county of Suffolk, and a Bachelor of Arts of Cambridge, who had argued himself into a disbelief of all revealed religion, prevailed upon Mr. Hume to present a petition to the British House of Commons, professing his disbelief in Christianity, complaining of intolerant persecution, because his oath, as being that of a deist, who rejected the Gospel, could not be received in a court of justice, and praying "that the House would decree that he, and all other persons holding similar opinions, should be entitled to have their evidence received, by *swearing upon the*

works of nature, in the same manner as all other testimony is now received from persons sworn upon the Gospels." To hold such opinions, under any circumstances, was no proof of a very sound head; to make such a proposal to an assembly of sensible, educated legislators betrayed a melancholy aberration of intellect; to find a person who would not dissuade it was a great misfortune; yet the petition containing this miserable trash was presented to the Commons of England by Mr. Hume, as being " of considerable importance, from its connection with the rights of British subjects, and the privileges of civil and religious liberty." Some members spoke of this strange proceeding with great warmth, but Mr. Peel treated it with the only feeling which it deserved. " He wished," he said, " to bring the House back to the subject directly before it, and from which he thought their attention was gradually straying. In the discussion which had taken place, there were two questions agitated, and he differed with some honorable members with respect to the introduction of one of them at present. The first was, whether this House should agree to the prayer of the petition which had been presented; and the second was

whether that petition should be received at all. On the first he had a very strong opinion, which, however, he would not at that time express; but if ever the Honorable gentleman followed up the petition, by bringing forward a Bill to relieve the petitioner from the obligation of an oath; he would be prepared to meet the Honorable gentleman, and to oppose him, and those who should support him; and to contend for the preservation of our dearest rights, and the best interests of society. At the same time he was not prepared to say that it would be wise to reject the petition altogether, if it were respectfully worded, because the House might not ultimately choose to agree to its prayer. He also thought it would not be right to attribute too much importance to a petition of this description. Whatever gentlemen might feel upon the subject, the House should restrain itself from the expression of any opinion upon it at present, and confine itself to the decision of the question which was immediately before it."

The commencement of 1827 presented a much more flattering prospect, as regarded public affairs, than the events of the concluding months of the preceding year had afforded any reasons for anticipating. The apprehension of

a deficiency in the produce of the late harvest had passed away; the different moneyed and manufacturing interests were recovering from the confusion in which the wild speculations of the preceding eighteen months, by a progress, which, though slow, was sure, and which, from the very great caution still observed by commercial men, justified the belief which was gaining ground daily in the public mind, that the apparent improvement did not proceed from overstrained exertions of factitious scheming, but was the result of a natural return to a healthy commercial system. There were no longer any failures of banks reported daily, nor did there any longer exist a necessity for the adoption of extraordinary measures for the support of mercantile credit. Employment was now furnished to the operative classes, in their ordinary callings, so generally as to be almost universal; and although wages were still low, they were enabled to gain a livelioood; and the associations which had been formed in the manufacturing districts to collect aud distribute charitable contributions among the unemployed, found themselves able to suspend, for a time, their humane occupation.

The earliest event of the year 1827, which occurred to engage public attention, was the

death of the Duke of York. The health of his Royal Highness had been for several months in a very unfavorable state. The disease had defied the skill of his Royal Highness's medical advisers, and gradually progressed until it had assumed the character of a decided dropsy, in the preceding month of July; in the September following it became necessary to perform an operation; this relieved the Royal patient, but the influence of the disease, though subdued, produced symptoms of mortification of a considerable portion of the skin of both legs, which assuming sometimes a more favorable and sometimes a more alarming appearance, gradually weakened the frame and constitution; as strength declined, appetite and sleep departed. Amidst weakness and agonizing pain, he displayed the greatest fortitude, attending to the more important parts of his official duties, even till within a few days of his death. He forgot all bodily sufferings, and the danger which it was not concealed from him attended his disease, and devoted himself to draw up with his own hand the heads of the arrangement, for the armament so unexpectedly dispatched to Portugal in December, 1826; and the last act of his official life was obtaining,

when his Majesty visited him on the 27th of December; the King's approbation of a proposed arrangement for the promotion of the old subalterns of the army; and on the 29th of December his Royal Highness received his Majesty's last visit. Hope was now gone; the constitution had sunk beyond the power of art to revive it; nervous fits, occasional attacks of faintness, spasms and delirium succeeded each other with increasing rapidity, till nature gave up the struggle, and he expired on the 5th of January, 1827, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

Never was the death of a Prince accompanied by more sincere and universal regret; and seldom have the services of one so nearly allied to the throne bequeathed to the country so much solid and lasting good as resulted from his long administration of the British army. His private character, frank, honorable and sincere, was formed to conciliate personal attachments; a personal enemy he never made, and a friend once gained he never lost. Failings he had—he was improvident in pecuniary matters; his love of pleasure, though it observed the decencies, did not always respect the moralities of private life; and his errors in that

respect had been paraded to the public view by the labours of unwearying malice and shameless, unblushing profligacy. But in the failings of the Duke of York there was nothing un-English, nothing unprincely. Never was a man more easy of access, more fair and upright in his dealings, more affable in his manners; and it was truly said of him that he never broke a promise, and never deserted a friend.

The death of the Duke of York left a vacancy in the appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the army. The voice of that army, and of the public generally, was unanimous in pointing out his successor. There was one man in whom personal merit and the confidence of the country were united: it is scarcely necessary to add that that person was the Duke of Wellington. The Minister at once bowed to the general feeling, and his Grace was called to preside over that army in peace, which in war he had so often led to victory in the field.

Parliament met, pursuant to adjournment, on the 8th of February; and one of its earliest measures was, to vote an address of condolence to the King, on the death of a relative to whom it was well known his Majesty was so affectionately and warmly attached. Lord Liver-

pool moved the address in the House of Lords, and Mr. Peel in the Commons.

The address was moved on the 12th of February, and in introducing the subject, Mr. Peel observed, "he should studiously abstain from touching on any point which might excite discordant opinions or angry feelings; but he was confident that every man, whatever might be his political sentiments, would willingly join in expressing deep sorrow for the death of an illustrious Prince, who had executed a high office, and fulfilled an important trust, with great talent and untainted impartiality; and in testifying deep sympathy with his Majesty on the loss of a brother, who, after having been his playmate, had been the most faithful and useful of his servants, and who, on his death bed, could justly console himself with the reflection that he had never abandoned a friend or resented an injury. Laboured panegyrics on departed Princes were better suited to despotic countries, than to those where the human mind grew up in robust and healthy freedom; but he was confident he did not transgress the truth, when he said, that the late Duke of York possessed qualities which eminently fitted him for the discharge of his

eminently fitted him for the discharge of his high duties, and had lost no opportunity of turning them to advantage in the discharge of those duties; that, as Commander-in-Chief, he had improved the discipline, and raised the moral character of the army. No man was capable of appreciating what he had effected in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief, who had not made himself acquainted with the state, the discipline, and the constitution of the army, when the Duke entered upon his office, as well as with its state when death removed him from the command. "I can never forget," said Mr. Peel, "the last words which I heard from the Royal Prince, only nine days before his death. When he received the news of a part of our troops having landed at Lisbon, he exclaimed, in a faint but triumphant tone, 'I wish that the country could compare the state of the brigade which has landed at Lisbon in 1827, with the state of the brigade which landed at Ostend, in 1794.' These were the last words which I heard from the living lips of the Duke of York." The Duke had been forty-six years a soldier, and when he came into office he declared that no man should, for the future, labour under the disadvantages which he had had to

contend with. During the long period, the ten thousand days, in which the Duke of York had been in office, he (Mr. Peel) did not think that one of those days had been passed without his devoting some portion of it to the business of his official situation. The impartiality of the Royal Duke had always been the theme of applause in that House, whenever his disposal of commissions had been brought under its notice. During the whole of the time that the Duke of York had been in office, there had never been an instance of an officer being raised by purchase over the head of another, without the offer being previously made to that officer; or unless he had, for some reason, forfeited his claim to promotion. Three-fourths of the commissions which were given away in 1825, without purchase, were conferred upon the sons or relatives of old officers. The Duke had possessed extraordinary advantages from having been in the army for forty-six years. It was no slight encouragement for a soldier to know that an experienced eye observed him, while there was no greater advantage to a commander-in-chief than to know who had seen service." He concluded by moving the address.

Mr. Peel's motion was seconded by Mr. Brougham, and supported by Sir Robert

Wilson; indeed all political asperity was forgotten in a unanimous expression of respect for the private character and official conduct of the deceased. The address was voted unanimously.

The death of the Duke of York altered the position of the Duke of Clarence, by bringing his Royal Highness one step nearer to the throne, and placing him in the situation of heir presumptive to the Crown. To enable his Royal Highness to meet the expenses of an increased establishment, which this circumstance called for, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 15th of February, proposed, in a committee of supply, an additional grant of £3,000 a-year to the Duke, and £6,000 to the Duchess. This increase was opposed by Mr. Brougham and Mr. Abercrombie, as an unnecessary and extravagant expenditure of public money, and defended by Mr. Peel on the ground of necessity and impartial justice; he was ready, he observed, to prove if necessary, that the unavoidable expenditure of their Royal Highnesses would be increased by more than the sum now proposed to be added to their income.

The motion, after a long debate, was carried by a majority of 167 to 65.

At no previous time had public attention been fixed more intently on the subject of Catholic Emancipation than it was at the commencement of the year 1827. The triumph which the friends of emancipation obtained in the House of Commons, in 1826, although not the first obtained in that branch of the Legislature, had given strength to their hopes, and invigorated their exertions. The result of the general election, which had taken place since the last session, had, as they flattered themselves, been favourable to their cause. The Catholic Association had also continued its operations; the law passed in the previous session for its suppression not having been put in force, and all circumstances appeared favourable to their wishes.

With regard to the Catholic Association, in reply to a question put by the Marquis of Chandos, wishing to be informed why the law for putting down the Catholic Association had not been carried into effect, Mr. Peel stated that "the institution of a criminal prosecution against a body like the Catholic Association involved not only questions of law, but questions of discretion.

"The former was decided by the Law Officers

of the Crown, but the latter was decided by the administration generally. If, therefore, a responsibility was to attach to any one, for the noninforcement of the law against the Catholic Association, it attached quite as much to himself, as Home Secretary, as to the Attorney General for Ireland; certain it was, they had both of them thought it right not to enforce the law against the Catholic Association.

Sir Francis Burdett had been intrusted with the general petition of the Catholics, and had undertaken to bring the question under the notice of the House of Commons. Accordingly on the 5th of March, he moved the following resolution. "That this House is deeply impressed with the necessity of taking into immediate consideration, the laws inflicting penalties on his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, with the view of removing them." The debate lasted, by adjournment, two nights. The motion was supported by Lord Morpeth, Mr. Villiers Stewart, Mr. Spring Rice, Mr. Brownlow, Mr Richard Martin, Sir John Newport, Lord Elliot, Mr. Plunkett, Mr. Brougham and Mr Canning: and opposed by Mr. G. Dawson, Mr. G. Bankes, Mr. Cust, Mr. Hart Davis, Sir. John Copley, Mr. Goulburn and Mr.

Peel. In his address, which on this occasion, was more than usually forcible and eloquent, Mr. Peel observed, "great stress had in the course of the present debate, been laid on the articles of the treaty of Limerick. In the discussion, which had taken place on this subject, in 1821, he stated that, if he could be satisfied, any of the privileges, withheld from the Roman Catholics, were so withheld in violation of the treaty of Limerick, it would very materially influence his judgment, in deciding on the present question. From that avowal, he would not now shrink; but after having examined into this matter with the greatest attention, he felt a most perfect conviction, that that treaty afforded the Catholics no claims to have the disabilities removed. That treaty was concluded, on the 3rd of October, 1691, and the conduct of the legislature, which met about three weeks afterwards, was somewhat remarkable, for it passed the very first statute which excluded Catholics from seats in Parliament, by requiring the taking the oaths of allegiance, and supremacy. If that treaty, which had been so very recently passed, could have borne the construction, which was now attempted to be put upon it; was it likely that the Whig Ministry

of that day, among whom, were Lord Godolphin, and Sir. J. Somers, would have been instrumental in passing such a statute, or that King William would have been base enough to have given his assent to it?"

Upon the general question, Mr. Peel said, "that the reasons which he had heard given for concession, actually increased his dislike to it, and he could not admit, that the great names which had been used, stood at all in his way. Mr. Pitt had always rested his reasons for the removal of Catholic disabilities, on grounds totally different from any which had been used on the present occasion. When Mr. Fox proposed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, in 1790, a measure the same in principle as that now proposed, Mr. Pitt repudiated the doctrine in as strong terms as it was possible for man to use; and in 1805, he had expressed himself on the subject, of the Catholic claims, to the effect that, he could not allow at any time, under any circumstances, that the Catholics were entitled to have their disabilities removed as a matter of right. Neither could he (Mr. Peel) admit it as a right; and looking at it only as a question, deeply involving the public good, he could not conscientiously bring himself

to vote for what was termed emancipation, and found himself compelled frankly to say, that he preferred a system of exclusion to one of securities.

"For," continued Mr. Peel, "I must fairly confess that I have a distrust of the Roman Catholics. I do not find fault with the faith of any man, and I think quite as highly of a Catholic as of a Protestant; but if on a man's faith there be founded a scheme of political influence, then we have a right to enquire into that scheme; and I cannot contemplate the doctrines of absolution, of confession, and of indulgences, without having a strong suspicion that these doctrines are maintained for the purpose of confirming the authority which man exercises over man. What is it to me whether that authority be called spiritual or otherwise, if practically it influences man in his conduct in society? I quarrel not, however, with their religious tenets, as a system of faith. I have no objection to the professors of the Catholic religion, as individuals; but I am jealous of the political system which is ingrafted on those tenets; and I think I have a right, on this occasion, to look at and consider what has been the influence of those tenets in other countries.

"Few things appear to me more unnatural and improbable, than the supposition that the removal of the present disabilities would be the consummation of the wishes and efforts of the Catholics.

"It is the natural desire of every man to promote the welfare of the religious faith to which he is sincerely attached. If Roman Catholics were admitted into Parliament, what would be more just and natural than that they should labour, and who could restrain them, to better the condition of their religious system; to extend its influence in the country, and bring it into closer connection with the Government? The consequence would be to bring the Catholic and Protestant religions into collision in such a manner as might prove the destruction of the latter; and I confess, that I consider the confusion and disorder which must prevail for ages during the conflict, before that event could take place, a greater evil than the event itself."

Mr. Peel then passed to the consideration of the question, whether the concessions now demanded, if granted, would restore tranquillity to Ireland. "Although he believed that the admission of Catholics to Parliament, and to the high Offices of State, would endanger the

constitution; yet, if he were satisfied that such a measure would have the effect anticipated from it by some persons, he would, he said, sacrifice his apprehensions of the ultimate result to the attainment of the immense present benefit; and if he could not subdue his fears would at least make them subservient to so happy a consequence. He could not, however, make up his mind to believe that the removal of the disabilities would produce any such consummation. Did they propose to maintain the Protestant Church as that of the state? if they did, there would still remain the barrier between the Catholic and his wishes. When the advocates of emancipation should have succeeded in placing Catholics and Protestants on an equality in point of law, did they mean to place them on an equality in point of power; and if they did, could they imagine that Catholics would be found as efficient servants to administer the affairs of a Protestant state as Protestants were? If it were intended merely to remove from the Catholic the exclusion by law, and to give him a nominal eligibility to enjoy political privileges, which in practice he would be debarred from, the exclusion would then be the more galling, inasmuch as it would

seem to be the result of personal considerations, and not of legal disqualifications; and under such a state of things, agitation would prevail in Ireland in a greatly increased degree, instead of the system of tranquillity which it was contended by the supporters of the measure would be the result. Believing therefore, as he conscientiously did, that to admit Catholics within the walls of Parliament would be dangerous to the Constitution; that its only effect in Ireland would be to increase discord and dissention. If the House and the country were against him, he should bow with reverence to the majority, but he should still retain his opinions as to what was the system to which the country and the legislature ought to adhere; he thought it right to retain all the existing disabilities, as far as related to the admitting Catholics to the Legislature, and to Offices of State. He thought it right to do this, first in reference to the plan arranged for the succession to the Crown at the revolution; and secondly, because he did not consider that in reality any advantages were likely to result from taking a different course. In this belief," continued Mr. Peel, " however painful it is to me to differ from those persons for whom I personally

entertain the most cordial respect, and with whom, upon almost every other subject, I agree, I have now discharged a most painful duty—the opposing the resolution now before the House. I have felt that I had no choice but to state with firmness, but I trust without asperity, the principles which my reason dictates, and which honor and conscience compel me to maintain. The influence of some great names, of some great men, has lately been lost to the cause which I support; but I never adopted my opinions upon it from deference either to high station or to overwhelming talent. Keen as the feelings of regret must be, with which the loss of these associations is recollected, it is still a matter of consolation to me, that in the absence of these individuals I have now an opportunity of showing my adherence to those tenets which I formerly espoused; of showing that if my opinions be unpopular, I stand by them still, when the influence and authority which may have given them currency, are gone; and when it is impossible, I believe, that in the mind of any human being I can stand suspected of pursuing them with any view to favour or personal aggrandizement."

Mr. Canning having replied to Mr. Peel,

and in the course of his speech, observed, " he was ready to agree that at the period of the Union, nothing had been positively stated by Mr. Pitt on the subject, but of that great man's firm intention to carry the Catholic question, he was willing to depose before any tribunal, with perfect confidence, that he was deposing to the truth. He had no knowledge, nor had he heard of any other person, who was acquainted with the subject, or was likely to be acquainted with Mr. Pitt's sentiments, say, that Mr. Pitt had any otherwise altered his opinion, than to have resolved not to agitate the question during the life of his Majesty, George III. But although no positive promise had been given to the Catholics at the time of the Union, they undoubtedly lent their aid to that measure, on the understanding, that greater facilities would thereby be afforded for their emancipation."

The House then divided, the motion was lost by a majority of four, the numbers being —for the motion, 272; against it, 276. Thus proving, notwithstanding Mr. Canning's expressed opinion to the contrary, that the Catholic Cause had lost strength by the result of the general election.

Mr. Peel's speech, on this occasion, made a great impression. The Anti-Catholic party, in the Cabinet, had suffered a great diminution of power. Besides the death of the Duke of York, the sudden illness of Lord Liverpool, not many days before the debate took place, had removed him from the Ministry; it was still doubtful how the Cabinet would be constructed, and there was already every probability that Mr. Canning, the leader of the Catholic party, would be placed at its head. Mr. Peel afterwards declared in the House, to some of his friends, that he had expected to have been in a minority on this occasion, and that, had it been so, his resolution was to have resigned.

The remaining portion of the session up to Easter, was occupied by discussions on the Corn Laws; and on the 12th of April the House adjourned for the Easter holidays to the 1st of May. It was during this adjournment of Parliament that the ministerial arrangements, rendered necessary by the severe illness of the Earl of Liverpool, were completed.

The Earl had been present and apparently in good health at the commencement of the session, and on the 12th of February moved

the address of condolence to his Majesty on the death of the Duke of York; and had given notice of his intention to bring the proposed alterations in the existing Corn Laws under the consideration of their Lorships. Within a few days afterwards he was suddenly attacked by a stroke of paralysis, and although the immediate and more violent symptoms of the disease were in some measure subdued by the effects of medicine, and the skill of his medical advisers, the mind gave way under the pressure, and although the bodily health was in a degree restored, the minister was lost; his Lordship was removed from public life for ever. Thus the Government was in fact dissolved, being unexpectedly by this act of providence deprived of its head. The difficulties of providing a successor, at all times great, were in this instance increased beyond measure by existing circumstances and the peculiar character of the Cabinet, over which Lord Liverpool had presided, and which had for years been kept together solely by the weight and force of personal respect in which the premier was held, not only by his own party and personal friends, but by the public generally. It was well known that the Cabinet had, from the time of,

and even previous to the death of Lord Londonderry, been divided in opinion upon some of the most important questions, which had from time to time engaged public attention. For instance, the Catholic question; the alterations in the silk trade, in the Navigation Laws and the Corn Laws; on all these important questions it was notorious, that the most opposite opinions prevailed, and were not only discussed warmly, but with acrimonious violence in the council.

But although this fact was, as has been stated, notorious, the public rested with confidence on the known character of the Premier. That character was held by the people as a sufficient pledge that the passion for novelty and theory would not be allowed to run into ruinous extravagance, or destructive speculation, for seldom indeed had a minister, not distinguished by any striking brilliancy of genius, and certainly greatly inferior as he was to more than one of his colleagues, in popular eloquence, gained so much influence, and conciliated such universal favour by the mere force of his personal character. He possessed a sound, cautious, business mind; a long official life had stored it with all the political knowledge which a mi-

nister requires; regular and confirmed habits of business, had given him a complete command of it, whenever occasion called for exerting that command. Above all, the country trusted in his pure and unquestioned integrity. He was never suspected of governing to serve party purposes; he never made a speech for the pleasure of a triumph; he never entered upon an intrigue to acquire or to retain power. He was as open and manly in his conduct, as he was honest and prudent in his resolves. He was confessedly disinterested; every man knew that he cared little though the act of to-day, if done for conscience sake, should lose him his place to-morrow; and, therefore, the public felt convinced that he would do nothing unworthy with a view of retaining it.

By his removal from office, the differences which have been alluded to, were freed from the weight which had hitherto compressed and restrained them. The men who had willingly acted in subordination to Lord Liverpool, were by no means disposed to yield to each other. The Catholic question, above all, was now the stone of offence, and upon that rock the Cabinet went to pieces. The Anti-Catholic party comprised the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of

Wellington, and Mr. Peel, while Mr. Canning was from his talent and situation the acknowledged leader of the friends and supporters of emancipation. These circumstances were unfortunately those which could not fail to call into play, motives of personal consideration, and personal ambition. If a minister was to be sought among those members of the Cabinet who were friendly to the Catholic claims, no doubt could be entertained that Mr. Canning must be the person selected, and even without reference to that question, popular opinion would have pointed out the Foreign Secretary, as being best entitled by his genius, his eloquence, by his statesman-like accomplishments, as well as by political experience, to claim to be appointed Prime Minister of England. In addition to these circumstances, he stood well with the opposition, on whose support to a certain extent he might reckon. Every thing, therefore, conspired to point out Mr. Canning as the future Minister. The Anti-Catholic party, again, could not select from among themselves any candidate who could claim the vacant office on grounds equally popular with those put forth by the Foreign Secretary. The Lord Chancellor and the Duke of Wel-

lington were held to be disqualified, the one by his great age; the other by his military habits and character.

Mr. Peel alone enjoyed that sort of weight and reputation which ought to belong to a Minister. In him a great portion of the community, and that not the least respectable or influential, reposed perfect confidence. He was in fact the leader of the Anti-Catholic party; but Mr. Peel was a much younger statesman than Mr. Canning, and certainly at the time in question a less brilliant debater; and it was scarcely to be expected that Mr. Canning, with the tempting prize for ambition, the Premiership within his reach, would resign it to his youthful competitor, of whose rising reputation and expanding talent he was becoming daily more jealous, and consent himself to act a subordinate part to his, as yet, less experienced colleague. Mr. Peel, on the contrary who was free from any sentiment of jealousy, or desire of rivalry, and who, it appears from his subsequent conduct, had neither desired nor expected to be placed at the head of the Treasury, had from conscientious motives, determined to resign, if Mr. Canning were appointed, and had stated as much to his friends.

Under these difficulties, his Majesty sent for Mr. Canning to consult with him, and give him his commands to form an administration; but here new difficulties arose, Mr. Canning made it a *sine qua non*, that if not Minister himself, some friend of his own, who favoured the Catholic claims should be placed at the head of the Treasury. When this proposition was communicated to the Lord Chancellor Eldon, the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, those individuals immediately declared they could not accede to such an arrangement, and Mr. Peel at once stated, that should Mr. Canning be appointed First Lord of the Treasury, he should immediately resign, as he could not conscientiously continue to form a part of an administration, of which that Right Honorable gentleman was the head.

These differences led to new negociations, in which the latter part of February, and the whole of the month of March were consumed, and during all that period, the country was in fact without a responsible Minister. These negociations were, however, so judiciously and noiselessly conducted, that not so much as a whisper on the subject reached the public ear. The delay in perfecting the arrangements of the Cabinet were imputed to feelings of deli-

cacy towards Lord Liverpool, and a wish on the part of his Majesty not to make any change whilst there remained the slightest chance of that nobleman's restoration to health; a plausible reason, and one, in the propriety of which, the public generally accorded.

At length, however, his Majesty finding his difficulties increase, and the skein of negociation becoming more and more entangled, determined to cut the knot which he could not untie. And accordingly on the 10th of April, Mr. Canning received the King's command to proceed immediately to form a new administration, of which he was to be the head.

Mr. Canning accordingly commenced his task, by opening anew his communications with those who had acted with him under Lord Liverpool, and within less than eight and forty hours found himself deprived of the assistance of no less than seven of those who had been his colleagues in the late Cabinet. Of Mr. Peel's determination he had been long aware, and it was repeated to him in an interview which he had with him in the afternoon of the 10th of April, and in the evening of that day, he received a similar communication from Lord Eldon. Mr. Peel's re-

signation was accompanied by those of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Bexley, Lord Bathurst, and Lord Westmoreland; Mr. Wallace retired from the Mastership of the Mint, Sir Charles Wetheral resigned the Attorney Generalship. The Duke of Dorset, the Duke of Montrose, and the Marquis of Londonderry also resigned their appointments; and Lord Melville was soon after added to the list of retiring Ministers. Lord Bexley afterwards retracted his resignation, and the name of the Marquis of Graham was added to the list of seceders.

These changes, when announced, came most unexpectedly on the country. The public had contemplated the probable elevation of Mr. Canning, but it had not contemplated that elevation accompanied by the removal of so much of that high character and acknowledged talent which had for so long a period enjoyed the national confidence, and in which it had so implicitly trusted for the guardianship of its honor and its interests; and there are few instances which form a parallel with that which we are now narrating, as regards the absurdities into which mere party spirit will betray men of every grade. By the

supporters of Mr. Canning and by the Whig party, abuse of every kind was lavished most unsparingly upon Mr. Peel, and the rest of the seceding Ministers. Mr. Canning was represented as the intended victim of an ungenerous and unconstitutional cabal: the resigning Ministers, it was said, had hoped to force the King to adopt their views, by leaving him helpless through their concerted resignation. Arguments and assertions of this character were not only used out of Parliament, but were resorted to most liberally within the walls of the House of Commons, when Parliament again assembled after the holidays; but surely Mr. Canning and the friends of that Right Honorable gentleman, who had refused to give to their Sovereign and the public their services, unless on the condition that an individual favorable to the question of Catholic Emancipation was appointed to the Treasury, were not the persons entitled to represent the appointment of such a person as of so little consequence as not furnishing sufficient ground for the retirement of those members of the Cabinet, who were, and always had been, conscientiously opposed to that measure.

The recess of the Parliamentary sittings fortunately afforded Mr. Canning time to look

around him, for persons to fill the appointments rendered vacant by the retirement of his late colleagues; but as the King, had declared on appointing the new premier, that the Catholic question was still to remain an open question, as he was determined not to sanction any further concessions, Mr. Canning was not left fully at liberty to make his selections entirely from his own friends. The nomination of a successor to Lord Eldon was therefore a matter of the highest importance, and it was at length arranged that the Great Seal should be delivered to Sir John Copley, who was to vacate the Rolls to which he had been recently appointed, and who, on receiving the Seals, was to be raised to the Peerage, by the title of Baron Lyndhurst; Sir John Leech was to have the Rolls, and Mr. Hart to succeed Sir John in the Vice Chancellor's Court. In the Cabinet, Mr. Sturges Bourne and Lord Dudley and Ward, both personal friends of the Premier, were appointed, the first to succeed Mr. Peel in the Home Department, and the second as the successor of Mr. Canning in the Foreign Office; the Duke of Portland, who had married a sister of Mrs. Canning's, was named as Lord Privy Seal, and Mr. Canning was appointed

First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Robinson, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, taking the seals of the Colonial Department, and being called to the House of Peers by the title of Lord Goderich, and as the successor of Lord Bathurst. The Duke of Wellington was succeeded, as Master General of the Ordnance, by the Marquis of Anglesea; and the Board of Admiralty being dissolved, the office of Lord High Admiral was revived in the person of His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence. The Hon. Wm. Lamb was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, in the place of Mr. Goulburn; and the other vacancies, occasioned by the resignation of the Duke of Montrose and the Duke of Dorset, were supplied by the appointment of the Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Leeds.

Such was the new Ministry, at the time Parliament resumed its sitting on the 1st of May, 1827. The anxiety of the public to learn the causes which had led to the separation of men who had for so many years acted together was intense; nor was the curiosity to ascertain the process, by which a union had been brought about, between parties and persons whose political positions had heretofore been so opposite,

less powerful. The assemblage of Members was unusually numerous, and the Strangers' Gallery was, in a few minutes after the door had opened, crowded almost to suffocation, by persons anxious to hear the anticipated explanations of the principal performers in this political drama.

On the motion for a new writ for Ashburton, in the place of Mr. Sturges Bourne; Mr. Peel rose to address the House, and observed, "That, as this motion was immediately connected with the successor to that office which he had recently held, he trusted the House would allow him the opportunity of explaining the grounds on which he had resigned the trust. In the prospect of this opportunity, he had refrained from resorting to any other mode of explaining the motives by which his conduct had been governed. During the three weeks which had elapsed, since his resignation, his silence had been made the subject of many doubts and of much misconstruction! he had submitted to them with the anticipation of the present opportunity presenting itself for his *vindication* of his character before that House. He said *vindication*, for he could not conceive that a public man, embarked in the public service, was entitled, on light or trivial grounds, to withdraw

his assistance from the servants of the Crown, whose confidence he had previously obtained.

" The grounds on which he had retired from office were simply these: For eighteen years, from the first moment of his public life, whether in office or out of office, he had constantly offered an uncompromising, but, he trusted, a temperate, fair, and constitutional resistance to the extension of political privileges to the Roman Catholics. His opposition was founded on principle. He thought that the continuance of those bars, which excluded the Catholics from the possession of political power, was necessary for the maintenance of the Constitution and the safety of the Established Church. Therefore it was that he opposed their removal; and cherishing, at this moment, the same opinions he had ever done, and having taken the active and prominent part in the support of those opinions which he had always done, as a Minister of the Crown, he did not think that he could, consistently with his honor as a public man, agree to an arrangement which would, he knew, be beneficial to himself, but which would, likewise, if he retained office, materially forward the success of a question, to which he could never agree, and to which he had always offered,

and always must offer, the most open and decided resistance. Therefore, he determined to retire from the public service if Mr. Canning should be placed at the head of the Treasury.

"If his opinion on that question had been changed, he would have felt himself bound by a sense of public duty to have accepted office under his Right Honorable friend's Administration, and to have kept himself free even from the most distant suspicion of being actuated by private or personal feelings. But as his opinion remained unchanged, as the Duke of York was no more, and the voice of Lord Liverpool was silent, he conceived he had done right in acting on his conscientious belief, that the contemplated changes would strengthen a vital public question which he had always opposed, and that, in these changes, therefore, he ought not to concur. He gave up office because he could not hold it in connection with an Administration likely to forward the claims of the Catholics.

"Was it probable then it might be asked, that the appointment of Mr. Canning would have that effect? he assuredly thought that it would. Looking to his consistency and sincerity, and judging of him as he would wish to be judged himself, he believed it would be his

right honorable friend's duty, as he believed it was his intention, to press the claims of the Catholics, if not immediately, at least at no remote period. It was not merely that Mr. Canning differed from him in opinion on this question, but it was that the change in administration would have occasioned the transfer of all that influence which belonged, and most properly belonged, to the office of Prime Minister, to the hands of one who would use it for the purpose of forwarding an object which he, Mr. Peel, had always opposed. Moreover, it was not merely a transfer of that influence from one ordinary man to another, but a transfer from the most able opponent of the Catholic claims, to their most able and eloquent advocate. He saw that after such a transfer had been made, the government could not, in reference to the Catholic question, be conducted on the principles which had guided it under Lord Liverpool's administration; and, as he could not consent that these principles should be changed he had withdrawn himself from it.

" During the whole period from 1822 to the present session, Mr. Canning had given his most decided support to the Catholic claims. In 1822, he introduced a Bill to enable Catholic

Peers to sit in the House of Lords, which, after passing the Commons, had been lost elsewhere. In introducing that Bill his Right Honorable Friend had used these words:—"I solemnly declare to the House that I would not have brought this question forward, had I not felt assured that the reparation which I ask for the Catholic Peers is, in the name of policy, as expedient, as, in the name of humanity, it is charitable, and, in the name of God, just!" If then, said Mr. Peel, it is in the name of policy expedient, if in the name of humanity it is charitable, and above all, if in the name of God, it is just, I must believe, confident as I am in my Right Honorable friend's sincerity, that he will again introduce that motion; and what alternative would remain to me if I had continued in office? what would have been my situation? it would have been in fact neither more nor less than this—that I should have held my office on sufferance; I might have been called on in a week or a month to retire—and that too, at a period, infinitely more inconvenient than at present, for the formation of the ministry. Could I, after the declarations of my Right Honorable friend, coupled with his uniform conduct, entertain a doubt of the course which, in my

opinion, he is pledged to take as a man and a minister."

Mr. Peel here referred to the course adopted by Mr. Canning himself, when in 1812, on the motion of Mr. Stuart Wortley, he was placed in a position much resembling that in which Mr. Peel now stood; when on being pressed to take office under Lord Liverpool, and referring to the Catholic question, Mr. Canning observed, "Personal objection to the noble lord, I declare, I have none; I am actuated by no feeling of rivalry; and with the exception of this particular question, I could have no earthly hesitation in acting either under, or with him; but I cannot allow that the preponderance of his lordship's opinion should stifle mine. I cannot enter the Cabinet, pretending not to know that the influence of the noble lord will be such as to paralyze all my feeble efforts there."

"If then," said Mr. Peel, "I had accepted office I should have accepted it, knowing that these were Mr. Canning's own views of what the duty of a Minister invested with office is, and, above all, I should have accepted office in opposition to the example of my Right Honorable friend himself. An example which I honor, because I think it one which ought to be set by every public man standing in the

situation in which my Right Honorable friend stood." After some further remarks, Mr. Peel observed, "these then are the public grounds on which I have proceeded. Taking the view which I do of the Catholic question; charged as I was by my office with the domestic administration of the empire, and therefore necessarily mixed up, as I must have been, with every Irish question, I felt that I could not with propriety retain my office, I being the single Minister in the House responsible for the administration of the laws in Ireland, opposed by all my colleagues, and seeing them, as they certainly had a perfect right to do, if they thought proper, actively concerting with those who, on this important question at least, were, in fact, my political opponents.

"The only question that remains," continued Mr. Peel, "is, whether, having come to the resolution of retiring, I carried that resolution into effect with perfect good faith, and in a manner consistent with the respect due to the Monarch who had honored me. I would much more deeply lament the possibility of its being thought that I had violated the one or the other, than that I had taken the resolution itself upon insufficient grounds.

"The course which I pursued was this: the

very first person to whom I stated my inability to acquiesce in the appointment of my right honorable friend as Prime Minister, was my right honorable friend himself. I did not then know the intention of any other member of the Administration. I acted on my own opinion with respect to my own situation; from the first moment the subject was mentioned to me I sought for no reservation; I did not say 'I will postpone giving an answer until you make me a formal offer.' On the first occasion of the subject being mentioned, which was on the 29th of March, I stated to him, without reserve, my opinion with respect to the particular situation in which I was placed; and informed him, that my sense of duty would dictate my retirement from office, in the event of his Majesty selecting him as the head of the administration. I made that communication without the slightest interruption of the good understanding which has always existed between us up to the present moment. By the command of his Majesty, I communicated to one of my colleagues the course which I intended to pursue: but I did not even enquire of that individual, nor did I know how he himself meant to act. With the Lord Chancellor, I had no communi-

cation; I never opened my lips to him on the subject till the day on which Mr. Canning was ordered by his Majesty to reconstruct the administration. I did not know his Lordship's intentions, and he was unacquainted with mine. The charge which has been so industriously propagated against the late Ministers of having acted in concert—of having caballed—of having wished to dictate to their sovereign—is the very reverse of the truth. But whilst I avow that I did not act in concert with those of my late colleagues, who, like myself, have retired from office, I must repel the painful accusation which has been industriously preferred against me; that I look upon them in a different light from that of the esteem, respect, and admiration in which I formerly viewed them, and that I wish my case to be considered as separated from theirs. It is true I did not act in concert with them, but it is equally true that I am prepared, if necessary, to defend them against the charge of having acted as a cabal. I hesitate not to say, that the course which has been pursued by each of those individuals is not only perfectly justifiable, but with their impressions and views of public service, is one which ought to be held up as a great and splendid example

to all public men. When one thinks of the manner in which the Lord Chancellor has been treated, and that other illustrious individual, too, whose name is impressed on the brightest annals of the country, whose memory will not be more enduring for his military exploits than for the simplicity and integrity of his character, and the habitual deference and respect which he bore to the kingly office, and, above all, to the present Sovereign; when one thinks of the accusations, which, for the purpose of effecting some object or other, have been made against those great men, the ingratitude and injustice of the proceeding is so revolting that it is scarcely possible to speak of it with common patience.

" Such are the grounds on which I resolved to resign my office; and such was the mode in which I carried that resolution into effect. A separation from my Right Honorable friend, with whom I have acted so cordially on every point but one, is to me a source of deep regret, mitigated, however, in some degree, by the recollection that I have done everything becoming my character to prevent it. I retire from the service of my Sovereign without any personal regret except upon one point—namely, that I

can no longer avail myself of those opportunities which office afforded of introducing a system of improvement into the existing laws. To effect that object is the chief desire of my life; and I have the satisfaction of reflecting, that, during the five years I have held the office of Home Secretary, every institution coming under my immediate cognizance has been subjected to such reforms as were considered requisite and useful. I have likewise the satisfaction of recollecting that every law which I found on the statute-book at my entrance into office, imposing extraordinary restrictions on the liberty of the subject, has been either modified or altogether repealed. I may be a Tory and an Illiberal, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that such has been my conduct. Tory as I am, it is also gratifying to me to reflect that no law stands on the statute-book in connection with my name, which has not for its object the mitigation of the severity of the criminal law, and the prevention of any abuse in the administration of justice. It shall always be my object to maintain the ancient institutions of the country, with a natural prepossession in favour of the moral support which is uniformly derived from long experience and ancient associations,

but never allowing these prepossessions to prevent me from entering into the candid examination of any alleged abuse, with a view of applying a gradual and temperate remedy. On these principles I have proceeded in attempting to ameliorate the criminal law; I am proud to reflect that, by so doing, I have gained the confidence of the country, and the continuance of that confidence is the chief reward I hope or desire for any exertions I may be able to make."

Nothing could be more triumphant than this honest and manly exposition of facts, defence it could not be called, for there was nothing to defend; the independence, the ingenuousness, the sound constitutional principle, whieh pervaded it, produced in the House one general expression of sentiment; that of admiration and respect for the person by whom it was made. Mr. Canning appeared to join fully and entirely in the feeling of the House; he commenced his explanations by saying that throughout a continued intercourse with Mr. Peel he had uniformly found his conduct distinguished by the same just feelings and high principle which were so strongly pourtrayed in the speech he had just delivered. "He has," said Mr. Canning, "behaved throughout with manliness and can-

dour. I can unfeignedly declare that I do not know a greater calamity than that the country should, at this moment, be deprived of his services; not only in the office, the duties of which he discharged with so much ability and such signal advantage to the public, but in the general councils of the Government. We shall nevertheless, I hope, though deprived at this moment of his aid in the administration, have the benefit of it in his place in the general legislative business of the kingdom, as a Member of Parliament. From the beginning of the discussions on the Catholic claims I felt that our separation was inevitable, and could not be remote; would to God I could now persuade myself that his retirement will be only for a short period. If the necessity which made the resignation of one of us inevitable, had been left in my own hands, my decision would have been in favour of my own resignation, rather than have permitted his."

The task of explanation in the Lords and Commons having been disposed of, the attention of Parliament was directed towards the several important questions the consideration of which the illness of Lord Liverpool, and the consequent dissolution of the ministry, had interrupted.

The consideration of the Catholic question was postponed, as was the motion for the repeal of the Test Acts. A motion on the state of Ireland, of which notice had been given, was withdrawn. The usual motion on the subject of Chancery delays was this Session brought forward by Mr. M. A. Taylor, and met its usual fate, discomfiture, by a majority of 134 to 37.

In the mean time Mr. Canning was engaged in endeavours to strengthen himself by new appointments. The Marquis of Lansdowne was induced to accept a seat in the Cabinet, and the seals of the Home Department; Mr. Tierney was appointed Master of the Mint; Mr. Abercrombie became Judge Advocate, and Sir J. Macdonald one of the Commissioners of the affairs of India. Overtures had been made to Mr. Brougham, but finding, as he declared in his place in the House, that his taking office would have prevented the junction of the two parties, he had voluntarily resigned all claims of his own that could be held to stand in the way.

Out of office as in office, Mr. Peel proceeded, as he had stated, in his Parliamentary explanation, his intention of doing, to pursue his grand work of improvement ; the amendment and

amelioration of the Criminal Law. By his exertions five Acts were passed during the Session, which consolidated into one body, the whole of the laws regarding offences against property, divested of all their ancient trash and ambiguity, purified from their contradictions and absurdities, and most beneficially simplified in all their arrangements. His first step was to reduce the Statute-book, to the state of a *tabula rasa.* The first of the five Acts, the 7th and 8th of George the IV. repealed upwards of one hundred and thirty different statutes, commencing with the Charter *de foresta* of Henry the third, and ending with the Parliamentary Session of 1826. The second statute consisted of somewhat heterogeneous enactments, removing doctrines which had hitherto incumbered, or laying down general rules, which were henceforth to be applicable to the whole body of the Criminal law. It abolished *in toto* the benefit of clergy in cases of felony; a benefit, the very name of which, always keeping alive the recollection of its rude origin, excites our surprise, that it should still have survived even in the forms of law in the nineteenth century. One punishment, namely, transportation for seven years, or imprisonment for two years,

with public or private whipping, in the case of males, was appointed for all offences, to which no special statute affixed any particular penalty. The expences of official forms, which tended to render a pardon useless, by exacting from the pardoned prisoner what his situation in general, sufficiently proved him to be unable to pay, were in a great measure got rid of, by enacting that, so soon as a free or conditional pardon should have passed the sign-manual, the discharge of the offender out of prison in the former case, and the performance of the condition in the latter, should have the same effect as if the pardon had passed the great seal.

The phraseology of English Statutes had long been a reproach to the legislature. Ambiguous from an unnatural straining after distinctness, the reader, after labouring through folio after folio, was left to confess, with Hamlet, that his reading was but, "words, words, words." All excuse for thus perpetuating obscurity, in what ought, more than any thing else, to be plain and comprehensible to even the commonest understanding, was done away with, by simply providing, that, in future, whenever a Statute, in describing the subject-matter of an offence, or the party committing it, or the party against

whom it is committed, shall make use of the singular number or masculine gender only, it shall nevertheless be understood "to include several matters as well as one matter, several persons as well as one person, females as well as males, and bodies corporate as well as individuals" unless it be otherwise provided in the Statute itself, or there be something in the subject or context repugnant to such a construction.

The third of Mr. Peel's Acts contained the law as regarded offences against property in its new and simplified form. It is not necessary here to enter into the details of this long statute, indeed it would be scarcely possible to present them in an intelligible form within the compass of an abstract of reasonable or convenient length. It may, therefore, suffice to say that it affected no vain precision of systematic arrangement; it thwarted no confirmed habits of thinking; it trenched very little even upon received definitions; it brought the different grades and descriptions of crime into one view; assigned to each its plain and reasonable definition, and fixed its precise punishment, and, by laying down positive rules, removed distinctions which had frequently, under the old system, given rise to subtle objections on the part of counsel, and

to painful and embarrassing doubts on the part of the judges who had to administer the law, and to the jury who were to decide on the facts. It abolished the distinction between grand and petty larceny, declaring that every larceny, without regard to the value of the thing stolen, should be held to be of the same nature, and subject to the same provisions, as grand larceny had been previous to the passing of the Act. It defined clearly what should be held to be part of the dwelling-house in cases of burglary and of capital theft from a house, a question which, more than once, had puzzled and perplexed the most acute criminal lawyers to determine. Similar difficulties as to "possession, and the conversion of possession," in the law of embezzlement, and in the nice distinctions between larceny and fraud, were avoided, by simply declaring that if a person in the employment of another should be entrusted with the possession of any property by virtue of that employment, and then embezzle it, he should be held to have stolen it, although it should never have come into possession of the master, otherwise than by being in the possession of the person so employed; and by providing that, if on a trial for obtaining money under false pretences,

the offence should turn out to amount to larceny, that should be no ground of acquittal; but that the culprit should not be liable to be afterwards tried for larceny upon the same facts. In regard to punishment, the severity of the law generally was mitigated, not aggravated. The statute recognised four classes of punishments, and the offences were distinctly set out to which each class of punishment was to apply. The first was death; then transportation for life, or any term not less than seven years, or imprisonment for not longer than four years, with public whipping, in case of males, once, twice, or thrice, as the Court might direct; then came transportation for periods of from fourteen years to seven, with the alternative of three years' imprisonment; and lastly, transportation for seven years, or two years' imprisonment and whipping. The offences for which capital punishment was retained were robbery, whether committed by personal violence, or by a threatened accusation of an infamous crime; burglary, breaking into and stealing from a dwelling-house, church or chapel, and breaking out of it. Theft, in a dwelling-house, to the amount of five pounds, or when accompanied by putting in fear within the house; the plundering of wrecks, stealing of

horses, cows, or sheep, or killing them, with intent to steal the skin.

Those offences which consist not in feloniously appropriating the property of another to ones own use, but in maliciously injuring and destroying it, formed the subject of the fourth of this series of Statutes. It reserved capital punishment for arson; the demolition of buildings and destruction of machinery by rioters; the exhibiting of false lights and signals, with intent to bring any vessel into danger; the destroying any part of the vessel itself, or of the cargo, when stranded or in distress, and the impeding of any person endeavouring to save his life from on board of her. Other species of injury were left to be punished by different periods of transportation or imprisonment, and altogether the number of capital offences was considerably diminished. In many cases also, a summary mode of proceeding was introduced, which, so far as it went, was a limitation of trial by jury, and as such met with some opposition; but it was passed, and its effect has been to save many petty offenders, or supposed offenders, from the long imprisonment to which such persons were often doomed before the charge against them could be sent to a grand jury for investigation.

The last statute regulated the relief to be had against the hundred by persons whose property had been injured by rioters; and laid down the mode of procedure to be followed in applying for redress.

The debates upon these important measures occupied a considerable portion of time, and although some of the propositions were strongly opposed by those who opposed improvement, on all occasions when attempted in our public institutions, by setting up the cry of the danger of innovation, the wisdom of our ancestors, and the sacredness of our ancient establishments; the several propositions of Mr. Peel were carried, as brought in by him, and had his senatorial labours been confined to this subject alone, he would have richly earned and well deserved the gratitude of his country.

The carrying these Acts through the House formed the limits of Mr. Peel's exertions during the session of 1827, which, indeed, terminated soon after the passing of the Bills. On the 2nd of July parliament was prorogued by a speech delivered by commission.

The session which was thus terminated had not been distinguished by the occurrence of any very important or exciting discussions in either House of Parliament, if we except those which

arose out of the changes brought about by the illness and consequent retirement of Lord Liverpool from office. These debates had been decidedly of a personal character; man opposed to man, mutual accusation, recrimination, and explanation—these over, although for the moment they engaged public attention, soon ceased to interest. Curiosity once gratified, all interest subsided, and the contest for office was scarcely remembered, even by those who had taken an active part in all the transactions, more particularly connected with it. The events which have been narrated were, however, soon to be followed by one, which not only stretched public interest in this country, to the extreme, but created a sensation in every Court on the Continent; and taught to statesmen and others a lesson, one of the most impressive, which the history of politics in this country presents, of the vanity and uncertainty of ambition.

The health of Mr. Canning had been in a very delicate state even at the commencement of the session, and the mental anxiety which followed was but little favorable to its restoration. It was not, indeed, the mere ordinary contests of politics that now claimed his attention; neither was it the cares of empire which now rested upon him, that depressed his spirits,

and harassed his feelings. It was the unexpected loneliness in which he found himself, that irritated, perplexed, and exhausted him. At the very moment when he attained the very summit of his fortunes, he found himself left almost alone, by those whom he had hoped to have had as coadjutors; and who, he felt, when they left his side, carried with them much of the respect and confidence of the country. At the head of such a Ministry, as he had hoped to form, his influence would have been unbounded, his situation enviable. As it was, he found himself, as it were, forced to accept of favor, rather than to command; to negociate for the kindness of those, who had always been his political opponents, instead of moving on in the proud spirit of independence, surrounded by ancient friends. His pride was deeply wounded, by finding himself forced into a coalition, and in some measure dependent on the will and pleasure of those men, whom it had long been his boast and his delight to confound by his eloquence, or to make the laughing stock of the country by his wit. How much more acutely must he have felt, when he found that his very fate was dependent on their will and pleasure. Add to this, Mr. Canning was a man of the most kind and amiable feeling, and disposition, and the breaking

up of old intimacies, together with the necessity which existed of studying to conciliate old enmities, where he was conscious no confidence could ever be reposed, brought with it an irritation and disappointment infinitely more annoying and exhausting, than to him, with his experience of public business, the mere anxieties of government could ever have become.

His care-worn appearance, bespoke a mind ill at ease; indeed mind and body equally required repose, and soon after the rising of Parliament, he was seized with severe indisposition, which, however, seemed after a time to yield to medicine and the skill of his professional attendants; he left town for a time, and the Duke of Devonshire having offered him the accommodation of his beautiful Villa at Chiswick, the Minister accepted the offer and took up his residence there, flattering himself that a short retirement, tranquillity, and a purer air would, combined, have restored him to perfect health.

After he had been there a few days, it became evident to those about him, that these hopes were fallacious. The indisposition under which he had previously laboured returned with increased severity, accompanied by violent inflammation; this latter symptom increased rapidly,

ment which had so greatly distinguished his predecessor, formed no part of the bequest. The mantle of Elijah, had indeed descended upon him, but the judgment which should have accompanied the gift was not there.

Lord Lansdowne, and the Whig party in the Ministry, had vehemently opposed the admission of Mr. Herries into the Cabinet, and when, under the impression that the King strongly desired such an arrangement, they at length assented to it, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer was barely tolerated by them; and from the moment of his joining the Administration, they determined, as far as was practicable, to withhold all confidence from him, and in attempting to carry out this resolution, although on a question of apparently trifling importance, they contrived to wreck the Government of which they formed a part.

When the deceased Premier, in 1827, brought forward his Budget, he avowed his conviction of the necessity which existed for submitting the Financial condition and resources of the country to a thorough investigation. Mr. Canning further stated, that, in his opinion, the most effective mode of proceeding would be the appointment of a committee to carry that object

into effect; and then pledged himself that in the Session of 1828, such a committee should be named.

Lord Goderich, who assumed office on the avowed principle of carrying out all his predecessor's measures, held himself bound to do so, and as the period for the meeting of Parliament approached, the formation of this committee became a subject of consideration with the Ministry. As this was peculiarly a financial measure, it would appear but reasonable that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Finance Minister of the country, should have been the first person consulted on this important subject. The adoption of such a course was called for, not only as a matter of courtesy, but it was due to the importance of the office which he held.

The determination to proceed with such a measure, without having first ascertained what were the wishes and views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and even obtained his sanction to it, was, according to etiquette, to degrade him from that official weight which by practice and propriety belongs to the head of the department over which he was understood to preside. On the occasion to which we now allude,

however, it happened by some extraordinary circumstance, that before anything had been said on the subject in the Cabinet, Mr. Tierney, the most active member of the Whig section of the Cabinet, had resolved to take the lead in the formation of the Finance Committee, and at once to nominate the chairman, and this without even informing the Chancellor of the Exchequer, much less of consulting him on the important step he was about to adopt. He accordingly proposed to Lord Goderich that Lord Althorpe should be appointed chairman of the committee. To this proposition Lord Goderich offered no objection, merely observing that it was a question which rested more immediately with those members of the administration, who were members of the House of Commons, and with those gentlemen he should leave it to determine, advising Mr. Tierney at the same time to consult with Mr. Huskisson on the subject. Mr. Tierney accordingly did so, and after a few days deliberation, it was determined that an application should be made to Lord Althorpe, through the medium of his father, Earl Spencer. The offer was accepted, and Lord Althorpe's assent to the proposition for his taking the chair in the committee was com-

municated to Lord Goderich, who expressed his acquiescence in the proposed arrangements.

These arrangements all took place in the month of November, 1827, but not a syllable of what was going forward had been mentioned to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was thus kept wholly in ignorance of a matter which so vitally concerned his own office, and which ought to have been submitted, as a matter for deliberation, to him the very first instant the idea was entertained by the head of the Government. Instead of this having been done, Mr. Herries, on calling, on the 28th of November, at the Colonial Office on other business, learned for the first time that it was intended to place Lord Althorpe in the chair of the committee; that lists of the names of the parties who were to form the committee had been agreed on and circulated, and that all this had been arranged by the Master of the Mint, and the Colonial Secretary, Messrs. Tierney and Huskisson, without taking the trouble even to enquire what were the wishes or views of the Finance Minister of the country on the subject.

Mr. Herries, indignant at these proceedings, immediately addressed communications on the subject to Mr. Tierney, and Mr. Huskisson.

This communication called forth replies, which led to rejoinders, and a correspondence followed which occupied the time until the 20th of December; on which day, Mr. Herries, with a view to bringing the discussion to an end, addressed a letter to Lord Goderich from which the following is an extract:—

"My dear Goderich,

"It is now full time that some further steps should be taken with respect to the Committee of Finance. It would, I believe, naturally be my duty to bring that subject under the consideration of the Cabinet; but, after what has passed, and I advert to it with much pain, I feel that it is not at present in my hands. I must, therefore, learn from you, as head of the Government, what is the course intended to be pursued for the formation of this committee and the regulation of its proceedings. What has hitherto been done in this matter has taken place without consultation or communication with me, although it would seem to belong principally to my department of the public business." Mr. Herries then proceeds to comment on the transactions to which we have already adverted, and then observed:—

"Whether this be a proper view of the sub-

ject, and whether, if it be so, you could yet proceed upon such a principle, you are best able to judge; I do not feel that I could act in it upon any other. In order therefore, to relieve you from any difficulty, as connected with my situation, respecting the course which you may deem it expedient to pursue; I beg to assure you that if by putting my office into other hands you can more satisfactorily execute this most difficult measure you may command my most ready and cheerful resignation of it. I place it, and I beg it to be understood as being done in the most friendly manner, entirely at your disposal."

Mr. Herries' proposal to resign being communicated to Mr. Huskisson, that gentleman immediately announced to Lord Goderich that he would resign if the nomination of Lord Althorpe was not carried through. Mr. Huskisson, however, although he had thus expressed his determination, was prevailed upon not to resign formally, till it should be ascertained whether Mr. Herries was in earnest. Renewed applications were therefore made to Mr. Herries, who, however, was kept in ignorance of Mr. Huskisson's threatened resignation, which he did not learn until the 5th of January. Lord

Goderich in the mean time continuing to repeat his assurances that no slight had been intended to him; he was told again and again that he was wrong in thinking the Government was committed to Lord Althorpe, and yet he was given clearly to understand that the Government would carry Lord Althorpe's nomination through. As soon, therefore, as he understood for certain, that, in the event of Lord Althorpe's not being appointed, the Colonial Secretary would resign, Mr. Herries, on the 7th of January, addressed a letter to Lord Goderich, announcing his final determination to resign the Chancellorship of the Exchequer without further delay.

Next day, the 8th of January, the Ministry was at an end. Lord Goderich unable to untie the knot, resolved to cut it; he, feeling himself reduced to the necessity of allowing either Mr. Huskisson or Mr. Herries to resign, determined to escape the dilemma by resigning himself. On the 8th of January, therefore, he went down to Windsor, stated his difficulties to the King, and requested his Majesty would permit him to resign the Seals; permission was given, and Lord Goderich ceased to be Minister.

Such was the termination of the celebrated

Canning Coalition Ministry, after a feverish and fretful existence of seven months. The sudden reconciliation of the ancient political enemies of whom it was composed, deprived it, in its origin, of public confidence; and its duration was too brief to afford any opportunity for its regaining that purity of character which it had forfeited. The blame of its dissolution was thrown on Messrs. Herries and Huskisson, but those who were most industrious in circulating that charge knew full well that there was no foundation for it. Had no dispute ever arisen between those gentlemen—had the question respecting the Finance Committee and its Chairman never arisen, it was abundantly plain, to the most casual observer of passing political events, that the ill-constructed Cabinet must, without the aid of that dispute, have speedily fallen to pieces, from its own infirmities. The Goderich Ministry perished the victim of that want of confidence which its members felt for each other, and from a lack of power and energy in its leader. Lord Goderich took with him from office, the honourable, candid, and ingenuous character, which had always distinguished him; but he had failed to impress either the Sovereign or the public with any very high idea of

his energy and decision, or of his power and skill to grapple with difficulties, or to controul and smooth down jarring spirits when brought in contact with each other.

The King, thus abandoned by the Ministers to whom he had declared he would have adhered had they been true to themselves, sent for the Duke of Wellington, and commissioned his Grace to form a new Cabinet, of which he was to be the head. The Duke, thus authorised, immediately entered into communication with Mr. Peel, and other individuals, who had been members of Lord Liverpool's Administration, but who had seceded on Mr. Canning's coming into power. The new Government was speedily constituted; indeed most of the members of Lord Goderich's Cabinet were retained, except the Whigs, who had come forward to succour Mr. Canning in the hour of his necessity. Mr. Peel was appointed to the Home Office, in the place of the Marquis of Lansdowne; Mr. Tierney retired from the Mint; Sir James Scarlett resigned the Attorney Generalship, and Sir Charles Wetherell was appointed to succeed him. Mr. Goulburn was placed at the head of the Exchequer, Lord Melville had the Board of Control, and Earl Bathurst was ap-

pointed President of the Council; but none of the arrangements elicited so many comments as did those which regarded Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Herries, the two individuals whose irreconcileable disputes had proved so fatal to the late Cabinet; both of whom were retained by the Duke, Mr. Huskisson continuing to hold the situation which he had occupied under Lord Goderich's Administration, that of Colonial Secretary; and Mr. Herries taking that of Mr. Tierney, Master of the Mint. All the friends of Mr. Huskisson retained their appointments; Lord Dudley and Ward continued Foreign Secretary; Mr. Grant remained at the Board of Trade; and Lord Palmerston still held the appointment of Secretary at War. The Duke of Wellington, on being appointed First Lord of the Treasury, immediately resigned the command of the army. Thus, with the exception of Lord Lyndhurst for Lord Chancellor in the place of Lord Eldon, and Lord Dudley as Foreign Secretary instead of Mr. Canning, the Ministry was almost entirely restored to what it had been under the Premiership of Lord Liverpool.

The public however were far from satisfied with the course Mr. Huskisson had adopted on

this occasion: the personal friends of the late Mr. Canning especially were indignant at his so soon taking office with the opponent of his deceased patron—with those persons who had deserted his friend at his greatest need. The Whigs openly accused him of having sacrificed principle to a love of place. He was pledged, it was said, to measures to which the new Government could not but be hostile. Those who indulged in language like this, and such there were not only out of Parliament, but also within the walls of the House of Commons, appeared to forget that every thing which had been done, relative to our Commercial System, to the adoption of a more liberal Foreign policy, and on other points to which they alluded, had been done under the administration of Lord Liverpool, of whose Government the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel formed a prominent part, and that neither of those statesmen had resisted them.

In denying the charges which had thus been brought against him, Mr. Huskisson in his address to his constituents at Liverpool, entered at length into an explanation of his conduct; and in doing so, observed that he had refused to accept the Duke of Wellington's offers, till

he should understand what would be the policy of his Grace's government: and he was reported to have said, on that occasion, that he had insisted on receiving, and had received, from the Duke of Wellington, positive and special pledges that a particular line of policy should be followed, and that his Grace should tread in all respects in the footsteps of Mr. Canning. When the report of these speeches was made public, the expressions used by Mr. Huskisson attracted general attention. The Duke of Wellington noticed them in the House of Lords, and repelled with a prompt and even sarcastic contradiction, the imputation that he had bound himself to Mr. Huskisson by any particular declaration. "Pledges," his Grace said, "had neither been asked nor given; and if they had been asked they would have been indignantly refused."

Mr. Huskisson, in the House of Commons, stated, that he had been misrepresented, and that the utmost he had said as regarded pledges was, "that the presence of his friends in the offices which they had held under Mr. Canning, was a sufficient assurance as to the principles upon which the new Government was to be conducted."

It is certain, however, that these occurrences injured Mr. Huskisson, in public estimation, and that when he soon after withdrew from the Ministry, he was allowed to depart, scarcely followed by a single expression of regret. His separation from the Duke's government took place upon the following occasion.

In the course of the session of 1828, Bills were introduced into Parliament to disfranchise the boroughs of Penryn and East Retford, both of which had been convicted of repeated and incurable bribery. On the subject of these Bills two opinions prevailed in the House of Commons as to the mode of disposing of the forfeited franchise of the offending boroughs. One was that the privilege of election should be extended to the neighbouring hundred, and the other that it should be transferred to some of the populous and unrepresented towns, Birmingham and Manchester for instance. Mr. Peel, as leader of the House of Commons, had declared that having two boroughs to dispose of he would in the one case extend the franchise to the hundreds, and in the other transfer it to a town. Mr. Huskisson had gone further, he had declared in the House that should there be only one borough to dispose of he would vote

in favour of the transfer to Birmingham or Manchester. Penryn was first dealt with, and a Bill transferring the franchise to Manchester passed the Commons, and was sent up to the Lords. On the 19th of May, the East Retford Bill was discussed, when the Ministers, all with the exception of Mr. Huskisson, voted against transferring the franchise to Birmingham. Mr. Huskisson, however, was found voting against his colleagues. This was, no doubt, an awkward circumstance; it would, however, probably have passed over had not Mr. Huskisson himself thought it necessary, on his leaving the House of Commons at two o'clock in the morning, to write an explanatory note to the Duke of Wellington, and to dispatch it immediately to Apsley House, containing the following passage:—

"My dear Duke,

"After the vote which, in regard to my own consistency and personal character, I have found myself, from the course of this evening's debate, compelled to give on the East Retford question, I owe it to you, as the head of the administration, and to Mr. Peel, as the leader of the House of Commons, to lose no time in affording you an opportunity

of placing my office in other hands, as the only means in my power of preventing the injury to the King's service, which may ensue from the appearance of disunion in his Majesty's Councils, however unfounded in reality, or however unimportant in itself the question which has given rise to that appearance."

If words have any meaning, this letter must be taken as a resignation of office on the part of Mr. Huskisson; and so the Duke of Wellington understood it. He, therefore, immediately, on receiving it, laid the letter before the King, and addressed the following answer to Mr. Huskisson:—

"My dear Huskisson,

"Your letter of two this morning, which I received at ten, has surprised me much, and has given me great concern. I have considered it my duty to lay it before the King."

A reply so prompt and decided on the part of the Duke was what Mr. Huskisson was not prepared for; he had no doubt anticipated an answer of a different character—a request to remain in office, as a person without whose aid the Government could not go on: this is evident from the course he subsequently adopted.

At the time his Grace's answer arrived, Mr. Huskisson was in conversation with Lord Dudley. In the instant of astonishment he handed the note to his Lordship, who, on reading it, said there must be some mistake which he would go to the Duke and clear up. He, accordingly proceeded to Apsley House and had an interview with his Grace. It was short, but appears to have been decisive: Lord Dudley returned immediately to Mr. Huskisson, and reported to him the Duke's celebrated reply to his attempted explanation—"It is no mistake, it can be no mistake, and it shall be no mistake." With this answer, Mr. Huskisson, had he had a due respect for his own political character and reputation, would have been satisfied and have immediately retired from office. Instead of adopting this course, however, new attempts at explanation were made through the medium of Lord Palmerston, and by subsequent correspondence with the Duke. His Grace was not, however, to be moved from his purpose, and, on the 25th of May, Mr. Huskisson was informed that his Majesty had given instructions to supply the vacancy which his resignation had occasioned. On the termination of this negociation, a termination so little satisfactory to

one of the parties, Mr. Huskisson retired for a time to the continent.

Mr. Huskisson's resignation was followed by those of Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. C. Grant. Lord Dudley was succeeded as Foreign Secretary by Lord Aberdeen; Sir George Murray became the successor of Mr. Huskisson; and Sir Henry Hardinge was appointed Secretary at War, in the place of Lord Palmerston; Mr. Grant's place at the Board of Trade was supplied by Mr. V. Fitzgerald.

By the detail into which we have been led in tracing these proceedings from their commencement to their conclusion, we have been diverted from our usual course of noticing in their regular succession, the meeting of Parliament, and the various business of the session in which Mr. Peel took a leading part. The circumstances detailed in the preceding pages so far as regards the dissolution of the Goderich Cabinet, and the formation of the Government under the Duke of Wellington, are chiefly gleaned from the explanations given in Parliament by the parties who sustained the prominent characters in the drama. It may now, however, be necessary to observe that Parliament met on the 29th of January 1828, on which day the

session was opened by commission. The address in the Commons was moved by the Honorable Cecil Jenkinson, brother of the Earl of Liverpool, and seconded by Mr. Robert Grant. The discussion which followed upon it was, however, greatly narrowed and deprived of much of its interest, in consequence of the absence of the Ministers, who had vacated their seats by taking official situations under the new administration; the address was as usual an echo of the speech, and no amendment being moved, it was agreed to in both Houses without a division. As soon, however, as the elections were over, and the new Ministers had taken their seats; the work of explanation began; the subject commenced with Lord Goderich, who most properly took precedence, and on the 11th of February, on a motion for papers regarding our relations with Turkey; his Lordship entered into his expected explanation, in which he distinctly charged the dissolution of his Ministry to the irreconcileable differences which had arisen between Mr. Tierney, Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Herries, respecting the appointment of a chairman to the Finance Committee. On the 18th of February, Lord Normanby brought the subject forward in the House of Commons

and called on the parties most interested, to give some information to the House on the subject; the call was responded to by Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Herries, Mr. Tierney, and Lord Althorpe, who each addressed the House in explanation of the part they had taken in the by-gone cabinet contest. On the same subject, Mr. Peel observed, "he could tell nothing, because he knew nothing, regarding the dissolution of the late Cabinet, but he was ready to state every thing regarding his own accession to the present Government. On the night of the 9th of January, he had a letter from the Duke of Wellington, stating that he had been commissioned, by his Majesty, to form a new Ministry, and requesting him to return to London without delay, that his Grace might confer with him on the subject. He came to London next morning, and immediately waited on the Duke of Wellington, who asked him if he were willing to join a new Administration; stating likewise, that his Majesty intended to place his Grace at its head. He, Mr. Peel, expressed his perfect readiness to serve under him, it being understood that his Grace was to resign the appointment of Commander in Chief; and he took the liberty, at the same time, of

stating his opinion as to the manner in which the Cabinet ought to be constructed; namely, that from the state of the House of Commons, looking at the talents of public men there, and from the general condition of our Foreign and commercial relations, he was convinced that the country could not be governed on any exclusive principles, and particularly that it would be impossible to form a Government founded either on the principle of excluding the Catholic question altogether, or of carrying it *sine qua non*."

"In these sentiments the Duke of Wellington entirely coincided, and it was determined that an offer should be made to those members of the late Government, who had also been members of Lord Liverpool's. The Duke of Wellington replied "let us put the question to them fairly and freely upon public grounds." No stipulations were offered or required, but there was a spontaneous desire on the Duke's part, to make such propositions to those individuals as must be acceptable to all. The Duke felt the importance of preserving the existing policy respecting the affairs of Europe unchanged, especially as concerned the East; and he felt also that it would be a great public advantage to secure the

valuable assistance of Earl Dudley in the Foreign Office. On the 10th of January the noble Duke had assured him that no change would take place in the Government of Ireland; and although some dissatisfaction had been expressed in certain quarters respecting the appointment of the Right Honorable gentleman, who was Secretary for that Country, he could only say, that if it were left to him to name any person to that office, he could not select a person better qualified than the Right Honorable gentleman. Respecting the Catholic question, every member of the present Administration was at liberty to take what line of conduct he might choose; it was deemed to be an open question, and the patronage of Ireland was to remain neutral as it was pledged to be in Mr. Canning's Government. The Corn question had been referred to as a reason why a union never could take place between the remnants of the two former Administrations; now whatever was the value of the objection, it did not apply to himself; he had never expressed any dissent from the principles of the Corn Bill brought in by Mr. Canning.

"But he further denied that there was any evidence of the Duke of Wellington being hostile

to the principle of that Bill. His Grace had sat in the Cabinet, when it was introduced; he had voted for the second reading; and there was nothing, as regarded principle, which could be objected to him, for having altered the details. The amendment, which his Grace had moved to the Bill, formed no bar to his supporting another Bill brought in upon similar principles. But the fact was, that a consistency and unanimity of opinion was called for, or affected to be called for, in the members of the Government, which it was folly to suppose ever could exist. In consenting to become a member of an Administration, he did not surrender, or believe that he was bound to surrender his opinion to any man. He never would enter the service of the Crown, or of the country, if the terms were that he was implicitly to observe and adopt the views of any Minister. Could it be supposed that any head of an Administration ought to expect—or would any one who acted with him consent, that he should be permitted—to lay down his personal opinions like a formula, to which every one about him was bound, without objection or qualification, to subscribe? If Government were allowed to take its course, as much unanimity and exertion

would mark the Administration of the Duke of Wellington as had distinguished any Administration that had ever existed in this country; certainly as much as could belong to any Ministry capable of being formed under the existing state of parties.

"On only one other topic would he trouble the House. It referred to a subject which it was right should be fully understood, as connected with the dissolution of the late Ministry, and the formation of the present. On the 8th of January, when his Majesty had commissioned the noble Duke at the head of affairs to form a new Government, his Majesty accompanied his commands on that subject with the following declaration:—

"'I commit to you the formation of a new Ministry: the last Administration has been dissolved. But it is my duty to inform you, that, if that Administration had not been dissolved by acts of its own, I would have remained faithful to it to the last.'

There were circumstances which made it expedient that this fact should be known. For himself, he believed it was impossible to attribute the dissolution of the late Government to any other than the causes which had been brought before the House in the various expla-

nations into which several gentlemen had entered in the course of the evening. He thought there had been discussion enough. If there was any point connected with his personal acceptance of office that wanted explanation, he was ready to give it to any Member who might call upon him. But he thought his colleagues had gone as far as it was necessary or possible for them to go."

The result of the explanations given on this occasion did not produce a conviction on the mind of any one, that the resignation of Mr. Herries, or the threatened retirement from the Ministry of Mr. Huskisson, were the objects which had alone caused the dissolution of the Goderich Ministry. On the contrary, when we find Lord Goderich himself stating that there were circumstances in the condition of the Ministry which rendered it doubtful whether it would be safe for them to meet Parliament; and when we hear Mr. Huskisson declaring, that there were many things in its prospects which were in his opinion signs of evil omen, there can be little doubt that there were pre-existing causes, which threatened it with speedy decay, and rendered the post of honor neither comfortable nor safe. Had not such been the case,

Lord Goderich probably would not have seen the necessity of making the existence of his Government dependent on the continued adherence of any single member of it. The dispute between the Colonial Secretary, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, might have been the last straw that broke the elephant's back, but, if so, it must have been already sinking under the pressure of accumulated burthens.

While these explanations were taking place, the Finance Committee had been appointed. On the 15th of February, Mr. Peel submitted a motion to the House, which he prefaced by a general, and, as was acknowledged by all who heard it, able review of the financial condition, and prospects of the country; and concluded by moving, "That a select committee be appointed, to enquire into the state of the public income and expenditure, of the United Kingdom, and to consider and report to the House what further regulations and checks it would be proper in their opinion to adopt, for establishing an effectual control upon all charges incurred in the receipt, custody, and application of the public money; and what further measures can be adopted for reducing any part of the public expenditure, without detriment to the public service."

The motion passed without opposition, except from Mr. Hume, who objected to the appointing only one committee, whereas, if any good were to be done, and to be done in good time, there ought to be several.

The following list was handed in by Mr. Peel, as containing the names of the proposed committee—The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Tierney, Mr. Herries, Sir John Newport, Mr. Ward, Lord Althorpe, Mr. Ashurst, Lord Lowther, Mr. Hume, Lord Howick, Sir E. Knatchbull, Mr. Maberly, Mr. Home Drummond, Mr. Bankes, Mr. Baring, Mr. Robert Palmer, Mr. Littleton, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, Sir Henry Parnell, Mr. Wilmot Horton, Sir M. W. Ridley, Mr. Stanley and Mr, Huskisson.

During the session, the Committee reported upon various matters which had been brought under their consideration; but not early enough to admit of their recommendations being carried into effect. In a report on the state of the Ordnance Department, they recommended the abolition of the office of Lieutenant General of the Ordnance; but in this recommendation the Government did not agree, and when the Ordnance estimates came before the House on the 4th of July, a motion to give effect to the

recommendation of the committee was negatived by a large majority.

The detail of the estimates which followed the appointment of the Finance Committee, was, as usual, long and tedious. One grant of money met with an unexpected and ungracious opposition. Mr. Canning did not die rich, indeed he was absolutely a poor man at the time of his decease. In that respect he closely resembled his great master, Mr. Pitt. Office had not made him affluent; place and profit had not proved with him synonymous terms. He began the world without fortune, he spent his life in the puplic service: the emoluments of the offices which he had held, at different times, even added to the income of his wife's property, had scarcely sufficed to cover the expenses of his station; much less had they enabled him to realize a provision for a family. He held no sinecures, and his sudden death left his family unprovided for. Under these circumstances, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 13th of May, brought forward a proposal for granting to one of Mr. Canning's sons, a pension of £3000 a year; this being the only mode of bestowing a mark of the nation's gratitude, for a life of devoted servitude, which

the peculiar nature of the case admitted. Mr. Goulburn therefore moved in a Committee of Supply, "that the Chairman be directed to bring in a Bill, to enlarge and amend the 57th of Geo. 3rd." All he proposed was, to give his Majesty the power of granting to Mr. Canning's son, the pension to which, under that Act, Mr. Canning himself would have been entitled—a mode of providing for the family which seemed to him much less onerous than voting a large sum to pay debts.

This proposition, reasonable as it was, met with strong opposition from Lord Althorpe, Sir M. W. Ridley, Mr. Hume, Mr. Bankes, Col. Sibthorp, Sir Ronald Ferguson, Mr. P. Thompson and Mr. D. W. Harvey. While all these gentlemen admitted the splendid talents of Mr. Canning, they opposed the grant, some of them on the score of economy, some of them on the ground that it had not been deserved—one member held that the errors of Mr. Canning's latter years, had cancelled all the merits of his earlier life; another asserted that the errors of his earlier life had not been blotted out by the merits of his latter years – Lord Althorpe and other members of the old opposition, were willing to concede that his general

policy, from the time he became Foreign Secretary, had entitled him to respect, but they could not it was said forget the character of all his former measures, which had insured their constant resistance. Mr. D. W. Harvey preferred a charge against him novel indeed in its nature, but certainly as well-founded as those which had preceded it. The Honourable gentleman denounced the deceased Foreign Secretary "as a Statesman, than whom no man had ever more directed his untameable eloquence against public rights; and who moreover, *had enticed nearly the whole stream of opposition to his own side of the House.*"

The Ministers were unanimous in supporting the proposition, aud on this occasion they were upheld by many of the most active leaders of the opposition—by Lord Milton, Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Robert Wilson, Sir John Newport, and Sir James Scarlett. By these persons the merits of the question were placed on this broad ground, that Mr. Canning, throughout a long life, had devoted talents of the very first order to the service of his country, and, in following that service, had not merely lost the means of improving, but had positively deteriorated, his private fortune; in short, that he was

a most meritorious public servant, whose labours for the public good had been greatly under paid.

Mr. Peel, when addressing the House on this subject, said—"It had been observed, that, when Mr. Canning preferred the Foreign Office to the Government of India, he had exercised his option, and must have considered what he received as an equivalent for what he abandoned. That was to say, that no man in public life sacrificed his own pecuniary interests to the public service; for, if it were meant that Mr. Canning found in the office which he assumed a due equivalent in so far as ambition was concerned, still, on what principle was a man's family to be left in poverty, because his ambition had been exerted for the public good?—Why should the gratification of ambition, in holding high situations in the State, form of itself a sufficient reward. When they saw individuals acquiring high honors and great emolument at the Bar, and in other professions, why should they turn round to the family of a Minister now no more, and say to them, 'the gratification of ambition was his reward. It is true, he gave his services to the State, but we will not listen to your claims for reward from

his country, because your parent was satisfied with the gratification of his ambition.'

"This," continued Mr. Peel, "would be a low and niggard way of dealing with public men. In the present case there was every thing which could make out a claim, and nothing which could make it suspicious as an example; for, alas! similar talents, so applied, would but rarely appear. Mr. Canning, for twenty years, had held high stations in the Government; he had brought to the service of the State, according to his views of policy, most splendid talents, and he had discarded, during his whole career, all feelings of private and personal interest. There was here arrayed, therefore, that combination of circumstances which would prevent the present case from being drawn into any inconvenient precedent hereafter."

The motion for bringing in the Bill was carried by a majority of 161 to 54. On bringing up the report, Mr. Hume moved, "that it be received this day three months," upon which motion the House divided. For the motion 14, for the report being received 75. The Bill passed both Houses without further opposition.

Among the various subjects brought under the consideration of the legislature during this

Session, no one excited more, or so much public interest, as did the progress of a Bill introduced by Lord John Russell, for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. By the provisions of these Acts, dissenters were excluded from places of trust and power. The avenues to all corporation offices were closed against them, unless they consented to take the sacrament, according to the rights and forms of the church of England—from the pains and penalties incurred by an ignorance of, or wilful disregard of the regulations, laid down by the Legislature on this subject; those guilty of them could only be relieved by the passing of an annual indemnity Bill.

On the 26th of February, 1828, Lord John Russell moved the following resolution:—"That this House will resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of so much of the Acts, of the 13th and 25th of Charles II., as require persons, before they are admitted to any office or place in Corporations, or having accepted any office, civil or military, or any place of trust under the Crown, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the rights of the church of England." His lordship prefaced his motion, by a review

of the history of the statutes in question, from which he inferred that they had been originally enacted, for reasons which no longer existed; and that without serving any good purpose, they made of the dissenters, irritated enemies smarting under a continual sense of injustice, whilst their repeal would convert them into peaceable and amicable companions, if not into cordial friends.

The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Smith, one of the leaders of the dissenting interest in the House, and was supported by Lord Milton, Lord Althorpe, Lord Nugent, Mr. Brougham, Mr. Furgusson, Mr. R. Palmer, and others. Ministers were unanimous in their opposition to the proposition of Lord J. Russell, and the charge of conducting the opposition was confided to Mr. Peel and Mr. Huskisson.

Mr. Peel, in his speech on this occasion, acknowledged, in its commencement, that the question was one of great importance and one attended with very considerable difficulty. He was not prepared to say that it was one essentially interwoven with the interests of the Church of England; he did not consider that the two were so connected that the Church of England must fall if the Test and Corporation

Acts were repealed; but, in considering how to deal with such ancient laws to argue thus—'should we enact them now?'—was not a fair mode of meeting the question. Whether we should, or should not enact such laws at present was not the test by which to judge of the propriety of repealing them in a monarchy like ours, where manners and customs had often grown up and become interwoven with the laws. The principle on which he was disposed to look at these acts was this, was there that great practical grievance—that insult resulting to the dissenters from these laws—which imperatively called on the House to repeal them? was there any thing so absurd in them as to make such a course necessary? or were they of such a nature, that, if repealed, the Dissenters would be in a better situation than at present? so great was his respect for that great and important body, denominated Protestant Dissenters that, if he could be satisfied that they did labour under such grievances as had been described, he should be very strongly induced to consider the repeal of the Acts complained of. But he did not think that the great body of the Dissenters looked at them, when coupled with the indemnity Act, as so great an evil as the noble

lords and honourable gentlemen had described them to be. They had been told to look at the number of petitions presented to the House. Now, if he were sure that these petitions had been quite spontaneous, and not set in motion by any external influence, he candidly declared that he should be disposed to pay much more attention to them; but he could not consider them as such. At all events, if the number of the petitions which had lately been presented was insisted upon as a strong argument, ought not the silence of the dissenters to be taken into account the other way? It had been said 'look at the hundreds of petitions which have been presented this year,' and he was, therefore, tempted to ask how many had been presented at former periods? On enquiry, he found that only six petitions had been presented altogether between 1816 and 1827, a period of ten years: nay, what had been the impression of Parliament itself? In the discussion on the Catholic question, the gentlemen, who now supported this motion, had never urged upon the House the grievance and the insult of which they now complained.

"In 1813, Mr. Grattan had introduced a Bill to remove the disabilities of the Roman Catho-

lics, and the professed end of that Bill was also to do away with every civil disability of whatever kind, on the score of religion. But what was the effect of the Bill? It professed to do what he had stated; but what did it do? Why the Bill actually subjected Catholics in this country to the operation of this very Act, which was now said to be an insult and a grievance. The last Bill which was introduced, in 1825, professedly removed these disabilities altogether; but that Bill also left the Roman Catholics subject to the operations of this Act in England. The preamble of that Bill stated its object to be, "That all his Majesty's faithful and dutiful subjects may grow into one nation, whereby there may be an utter oblivion and extinguishment of all former dissensions and discords between them; thus consolidating the union between Great Britain and Ireland, and uniting, and knitting together, the hearts of all his Majesty's subjects, in one and the same interest for the support of his Majesty's person, family, crown, and government, and for the defence of their common rights and liberties." Now, when it was considered that a Bill which was to have all these desirable effects, never proposed to relieve the Roman Catholics from

the operation of the law of which the Protestant Dissenters were now complaining, he thought he was entitled to assume that the grievances suffered from that law were rather of an imaginary than a practical and real nature. Of the fact that there was nothing in any of those Bills to repeal the law in question, there could exist no doubt. Upon a question raised as to that point, Mr. Canning, the warm supporter of the Bill, said, 'Sir, this Bill does not tend, as is imagined by the petitioners, to equalize all religions in the state, but to equalize all the dissenting sects in religion. I am, and this Bill is for a predominant Established Church, and I would not, even in appearance, meddle with the laws which secure that predominance to the Church of England. I would not sanction any measure, which even by inference could be shown to be hostile to that Establishment. But I am for the removal of practical grievance. And in this view of the subject, what is the fact with respect to Protestant Dissenters? It is this, that they labour under no practical grievance on account of their religious differences from us—that they sit with us in this House, and share our councils—that they are admissible to the offices of the state, and have

in fact, in many instances, been admitted to them; but they hold these privileges subject to an annual renewal, by the annual act of indemnity. So with the Roman Catholics, if this Bill should pass, they will be admitted only to the same privileges, and they will hold them liable to the same conditions.

"This explanation of Mr. Canning's, was sufficient evidence to shew that the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, of 1825, had never contemplated the relieving the Catholics from the operation of the Test and Corporation Acts, as mitigated by the Annual indemnity Act. Nor was it wonderful that it should be so; for what was in point of fact the operation of these Acts? what was the extent of the exclusion which they inflicted? The House had been told, that, in Scotland, they acted as a proscription of a whole nation. Where, then, were the complaints of that country? From the whole of the population of Scotland, there was not one solitary petition, so slight and impalpable was the real practical amount of this fancied grievance. We had shed the blood, it was said, of the Scottish regiments in the Peninsula, and at Waterloo. Well, what office of naval or military command had been closed against their officers? But your

Test Acts, shut them out from the higher offices of the Government. For an answer to this charge," said Mr. Peel, "look at the Ministry; of the fourteen members who compose the present Cabinet, three, namely Lord Aberdeen, Lord Melville, and the President of the Board of Trade, were Scotsmen, and good Presbyterians, whom these Acts, nevertheless, had not succeeded in shutting out. Then, even in England, what was the fact as to Corporations? He believed that Dissenters were not practically excluded; that in the year preceding that, in which he was then speaking, the Lord Mayor of London had been a Protestant Dissenter; and he was convinced, that, in general, the law was not found to be a practical grievance. The fact was, that the existing law gave merely a nominal predominance to the Established Church. A predominance of some sort was admitted on all hands to be necessary, and the present was as slight a one as could well be imagined. He heartily wished, therefore, that this question had been allowed to remain quiescent; practically offensive, he believed, the law complained of was not to any one. All the arrangements and intercourse between the Dissenters and the Established Church,

had been marked of late years, by the most perfect cordiality; and he regreted that any chance should be hazarded, by which it was possible that temperate and candid feeling should be broken."

After a protracted debate, the House divided, and the motion for a committee was carried by a majority of 44. The numbers being: for the appointment of a committee 237; against it 193. Thus was struck the first successful blow aimed against the supremacy of the Established Church since the revolution.

The House went into a committee *pro forma.* The chairman reported progress and obtained leave to sit again on the 28th of February, the following day but one. On that day the House accordingly went into committee. A suggestion had, in the mean time, been thrown out by Sir Thomas Acland, that Lord John Russell's motion should not go to a repeal of the Acts altogether, but to their suspension only. To this proposition, his lordship at once declared he could not accede; he, therefore, moved their entire repeal. Ministers, however, who had not had time, during the short interval which had elapsed since their unexpected defeat, to consider the line of conduct which they should

pursue, objected to the motion as being too precipitate, and Mr. Peel expressed a wish that the further consideration of the subject should be postponed for a few days. The friends of the repeal were opposed to all delay ; they declared the expediency of the measure to be so clear and obvious, that no pretence whatever could be found for the required postponement, which would only do mischief by introducing an appearance of doubt where no doubt existed. "Away," exclaimed Lord Milton, "with these pretences—those who make them, know they are but pretences—their only object is, by delay, to regain the vantage ground which they have lost, and by defeating the Dissenters to defeat the best interests of the church." Mr. Peel immediately rose, with great warmth, to repel this, certainly uncalled for, and unwarranted tirade of Lord Milton. The Right Honourable Secretary observed, "that after suspicions, like those of the noble Lord had been insinuated, he would, not only not propose suspension, but he would not even accept delay ; although that delay was proposed for purposes, which, if his proposition had been accepted in the spirit in which it had been made, might have turned out satisfactory to all parties. He

would now leave the noble Lord to take the course which his judgment pointed out to him, declining any delay, but reserving to himself the right, at any future stages of the Bill, to adopt such measures as might appear to him advisable."

The resolution was then agreed to. On Mr. Peel quitting the House, which he did immediately, and, as some members supposed, in a bad and angry humour, Sir George Warrender rose and noticed the abrupt departure of the Right Honourable gentleman, declaring that such a display of impatient conduct would almost tempt him to withdraw his support from the Government; at this moment Mr. Peel re-entered the House, resumed his seat, and having been informed of the observations which had fallen from the Honourable Baronet, he assured his Honourable friend that his censures had been misapplied and that no such motive of impatience or bad humour as those imputed to him, by his Honourable friend, had influenced him in quitting the House; but having fasted from nine o'clock in the morning, and considering the discussion, so far as regarded his taking any further share in it, at an end, and having resolved, as he had told the House not to vote

on the motion, he had taken the opportunity which presented itself of retiring and was very agreeably employed up-stairs when a rumour reached him of his Honourable friend's threatened defection. He had hastened back to remove without delay the erroneous impression under which the Honourable Baronet was labouring. He was afraid, however, he could not secure the Honourable Baronet's allegiance; for assuredly if the question had not yet been put he should again leave the House the moment he perceived the Chairman about to put the question.

It now rested with the Government to decide on the course which it would adopt. Two paths were open to them, namely, either to employ all its influence still to stop the measure in *toto*, if not in the Commons, at least in the House of Peers; or to endeavour to engraft upon it some measure of precaution for the security of the established church, equally efficacious with the Tests, against the continuance of which one branch of the Legislature had declared its opinion most decidedly. They preferred the latter course, rather than the less gracious one of direct opposition to the declared opinion of the House of Commons.

A Bill, founded upon the resolution of the committee was brought in, and permitted to be read a first and second time without opposition. On the 18th of March, on the motion for the House going into a committee on the Bill, Mr. Peel embraced the opportunity afforded him of explaining the views and intentions of Government on the subject. "The course which he should pursue," he said, "would be to propose that there be inserted in the Bill, a declaration to be made by all persons appointed to any of those offices which had previously been made subject to the provisions of the Test and Corporation Acts. After the decision to which the House had come, he was prepared to dismiss from his mind at once all ideas of adhering to the existing law; still less would he adopt the proposal for the suspension of that law; to do so would be as objectionable, or even more so, than the indemnity Act; inasmuch, as it would place the dissenters in a situation in which they would feel that the law was still held over them in jealous distrust.

"The wisest and best course he thought would be to come to such a final arrangement, as while it should not effect the fair and conscientious scruples of the Dissenters, would give a reasonable proof to the Church of England, that, in

the repeal of these long established Tests, which were considered as a much valued security, her rights were to be held sacred. A recorded opinion should be given in the form of a declaration for the security of the predominancy of the Established Church. With this view he thought the Committee should be instructed to introduce a declaration to the effect he had alluded to, to be taken as a substitute for the sacramental Test, by the parties who were now liable to take the latter. He would not make it an oath, for that would be, perhaps, again to arouse the distrust of the dissenters, and subject them to an inconvenience, which, he thought could not follow the imposition of a declaration; and particularly when they looked at such an affirmation as interwoven with the principle of the constitution, and as requiring neither the renunciation of, nor the expression of any religious principle or any religious feeling. He should not feel it necessary to attach any penalty to the omission of making the declaration, further than the nullity of the election, and the subsequent Acts. There might also be a difficulty as regarded some persons holding offices immediately under the Crown, but that difficulty he imagined could be got over by giving the Crown a discretionary power to dispense with taking

the declaration, wherever it was considered proper to do so. If clauses to this effect were introduced into the Bill, he thought himself warranted in saying, that they would insure its success, and the question, in the course of the present Session, would be settled for ever."

The supporters of the simple repeal, were all opposed to the declaration in point of principle. They described it as both useless and unnecessary; the best thing about it was the option given to Government, to require or not to require it from persons taking office under the Crown, for that held out a hope that it would be allowed to go into disuse. They united, however, in recommending that Mr. Peel's suggestion should be adopted, rather than the safety of the Bill should be hazarded. Lord John Russell, therefore, complied, the clauses were introduced, and, thus amended, the Bill passed, and was taken to the Lords.

In the Lords, the Duke of Wellington spoke in favour of the Bill; his Grace was followed by the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of Lincoln, Durham, and Chester. Lord Eldon, indeed, gave the measure his decided opposition; but, as the Government had taken it up, the Bill had become the Bill of the Cabinet, and

thus there being no opposition, it passed their Lordship's House on the 28th of April, and soon afterwards received the Royal assent.

In the course of the discussions to which we have thus briefly alluded, as taking place on the proposition for a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, frequent reference was made to the Catholic question. The opponents of the repeal urged as one argument, and a powerful one, on their parts, against that measure, that it was in truth but the first step in a career which was to terminate in Catholic Emancipation; whilst, on the other side, the supporters of the repeal as strongly denied that it could have any such effect; and Mr. Huskisson even went so far as to oppose the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, because the carrying that measure would, in his opinion, create a new obstacle to the admission of the Catholic claims.

Whatever might be the ultimate result of the measure however, the friends of the Catholics appeared determined to try what would be the immediate effect. Accordingly, on the 8th of May, Sir F. Burdett moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, for the purpose of taking into consideration the state of the laws affecting his

Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland; with a view to such a final and conciliatory adjustment as may be conducive to the peace and strength of the United Kingdom, to the stability of the Protestant Establishment, and to the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of his Majesty's subjects."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Brougham, and supported by Mr. M. Fitzgerald. Sir J. Newport, Sir James Mackintosh, Mr. Huskisson and others; and was opposed by Mr. Peel, Mr. Banks, Mr. Leslie Foster, Sir R. Inglis, &c. The arguments on both sides were conducted with much ability, but presented no new point; and, after two nights debate, the motion for a committee was carried by a majority of 6. In the preceding Session a similar resolution was, as we have seen, negatived by a majority of 4.

The House then went into a committee, and the resolution was agreed to, but the House proceeded no further. No more lengthened resolutions were proposed; no Bill founded on the resolution was introduced; but it was resolved, before proceeding further, to ascertain whether the sentiments of the House of Peers

had, in any way, changed on this important question; to effect this object it was determined, on the motion of Sir F. Burdett, that the resolution should be communicated to their lordships in a conference. The resolution was accordingly communicated to their lordships on the 9th of June, and was taken into consideration by the House, on the following evening, when, after a debate which lasted two nights, the motion of the Marquis of Lansdowne, that their lordships should concur in the resolution which had been adopted by the Commons, was negatived by a majority of forty-four. The numbers being, for the motion 137; against it 181.

Notwithstanding this descision the friends of emancipation claimed a triumph founded on the character of the debate, and from which they augured a less obstinate and uncompromising opposition to their wishes in future; they were encouraged in these hopes by the conciliatory tone in which the Prime Minister had delivered his sentiments.

With these discussions terminated the business of the Session, so far as Mr. Peel took any share in the debates; and on the 28th of July the Session terminated.

The close of this Session so far as Great Britain was concerned presented a scene of active, tranquil and not unprosperous industry; far different, however, was the state of Ireland. In that country political and religious party spirit, had assumed a form which threatened serious results. The Catholic Association had continued to meet and to agitate, notwithstanding the statute which had been passed with a view of suppressing it. During the short period of Mr. Canning's administration, Ireland had been comparatively tranquil. The Catholics, although aware that the Cabinet was divided on the question of their claim, yet reposed entire confidence in his declared disposition in their favour, convinced, should he remain in office, that emancipation would, at no distant period, be conceded. When, on Mr. Canning's death, Lord Goderich became Minister, their confidence greatly abated, and when he retired from office, and was succeeded by the Duke of Wellington, they lost all hope. True their exclusion had not been made a Cabinet question, and Mr. Peel had declared in Parliament, that it would not be possible to form a Ministry competent to the Government of the Country on a system of general exclusion; but still the head of the

Ministry would now be their enemy instead of their friend, and it was a powerful and energetic head instead of a weak one. They had also lost the Marquis of Lansdowne and Mr. Peel had come in his place—Mr. Peel the most immoveable and determined, as far as men could judge from his whole public life, and repeated declarations in Parliament, of all their adversaries. From the instant, therefore, that the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel were named, the Catholic Association commenced war against the Duke of Wellington and his Ministry. As a general Election was anticipated the first thing which the Association required of every candidate was, that he should pledge himself to be an indiscriminate opponent of the Ministry of the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, until those individuals should declare themselves Catholic Emancipators. A second pledge required was, that each candidate should further give his pledge to support the question of Parliamentary Reform.

Nothing which may be reckoned on as the result of political prejudices, combined with religious bigotry, ought ever to be reckoned extravagant. The Association had determined on a new trial of strength; one more daring

than any which they had yet made, and in which they were successful beyond their most sanguine expectations. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, one of the members for the County of Clare, had vacated his seat by accepting the office of President of the Board of Trade. A new election thus became necessary, but no apprehensions were entertained that Mr. Fitzgerald would not be again returned, as he had universally given his vote in favor of Catholic Emancipation; but he belonged to the Ministry, and the association determined to oppose him, and to go the further length of starting against him their own great Catholic leader and agitator Mr. Daniel O'Connell. From the moment this intention was made known, the County of Clare was traversed in every direction by the orators of the Association, and the popish parish priests; and as Mr. Shiel, one of the most flowery and eloquent of the Catholic advocates observed, "every altar became a tribune." Wherever a priest and an agitator arrived, the populace were instantly assembled, even at the dead hour of the night, and surrounded by the symbols of their religion, they were called upon by the infallible voice of its teachers to rise in defence of its honor, and its rights, against the

attacks of its opponents, who were represented to them as objects of horror and detestation.

On the day of election, Mr. Fitzgerald was proposed by his colleague in the representation of the county; Mr. O'Connell was proposed by Mr. O'Gorman, the Secretary to the Catholic Association. After a few days polling, Mr. Fitzgerald saw that to continue the contest with any hope of ultimate success was hopeless; he therefore resigned, and Mr. O'Connell was declared duly elected. A petition against his return was immediately presented to the House of Commons, but the session being so far advanced no opinion could be pronounced upon it previous to the prorogation of Parliament.

The result of the Clare election was, however, a matter of grave consideration with the Irish county members, and especially with those who had heretofore voted against emancipation. The indolence of the Government, or some other cause, apparently operated to prevent Parliament adopting any energetic steps to counteract the efforts which the Association were making, and making, as has been seen, successfully; and the Irish gentlemen began to consider it high time to look about them, and to adopt measures to come to terms with this

new governing power which had started up in Ireland. At a public dinner given on the 12th of August, to celebrate the erection of a monument to commemorate the gallant resistance of the city of Londonderry to James the II.; Mr. Dawson, one of the county members, was present. This gentleman had always been considered as one of the most violent opponents of the Catholics, he was the brother-in-law of Mr. Peel, and himself a Minister of the Crown; his language in the House of Commons had invariably breathed more than ordinary vehemence against emancipation; his last speech on the subject had announced firm and decided opposition to concession. On this occasion, however, he addressed the meeting, and declared that his sentiments were now changed, and that the Association ought to be conciliated by granting the emancipation which they demanded. He observed, there was but one alternative, either to crush the Association, or to look at the question with the intention of settling it. The latter was the course he preferred; the first, he did not seem to consider as either practicable or advisable.

Mr. Dawson's speech on this occasion excited a considerable sensation, not only in Ireland,

but in England also. They were the sentiments of a Minister of the Crown, of a near relative of the Anti-Catholic leader, who would hold no sentiments on the subject, different from those of the persons at the head of the Ministry. The white flag was thus held out; but on the part of the Catholics, there existed a determination to persevere, and to be satisfied with nothing less than a surrender at discretion.

These proceedings did not, however, contain any thing in them calculated to excite among the Protestant part of the community any apprehensions of an approaching change; and still less of the King's Ministers being prepared to propose and support such a change as a Cabinet measure. The Ministry continued to be, as it had long been, divided on this question; but it's head, the Duke of Wellington, and Mr. Peel, the most influential of his colleagues, had distinguished themselves by their undeviating opposition to the Catholic claims, not only on the grounds of expediency, but on the grounds of right also: above all, the correspondence between the Duke of Wellington and Dr. Curtis, which was laid before the public in December, 1828, justified the most entire confidence, on the part of the Protestants, that his Grace and

his Grace's Ministry entertained not the most distant purpose of yielding. Yet so it was, while the country was thus reposing in security, those individuals, on an opinion of whose firmness that security was founded, had determined on going over to the Catholic party. The consent of the King was the first point to be gained, it was likewise the most difficult. What were the arguments used for his Majesty's conversion can be learned only from the arguments by which the Ministers subsequently attempted to justify their own conduct and change of opinion. It was not until this consent had been obtained, namely towards the end of January, that it began to be rumoured abroad that the Ministry intended to recommend some concessions to the Catholics in the speech from the Throne. Such was the position of the different parties at the meeting of Parliament on the 5th of February 1829. The speech, which was delivered by commission, contained the following observations relative to Ireland and the Catholic claims.

"His Majesty recommends that you should take into your deliberate consideration, the whole condition of Ireland, and, that you should review the laws which impose civil disabilities

on his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects. You will consider, whether the removal of these disabilities can be effected, consistently with the full and permanent security of our Establishment, in Church and State, with the maintenance of the reformed religion, established by law, and of the rights and privileges of the Bishops, and of the Clergy within this realm, and of the churches committed to their charge."

"These are institutions which must ever be held sacred, in this Protestant kingdom, and which, it is the duty and determination of his Majesty, to preserve inviolate in this Protestant country."

In pursuance of the recommendation, contained in the speech, Mr. Peel, on the 10th of February, 1829, moved for and obtained leave to bring in a Bill, to put an end to the Catholic Association. In introducing this Bill, Mr. Peel observed, "he was well aware of the difficulty which existed of framing such an Act, as, in the present state of Ireland, could not be evaded, unless, indeed, they were to pass a law which there would be no difficulty in framing; but he very much doubted the propriety of passing such a law as that to which he alluded, namely,

to declare that every political meeting was illegal; but if such a law were passed, and every one left to enforce the provisions of it, he confessed that as Ireland now was, there would be great danger of its provisions being abused. To avoid this danger, however, he proposed to commit the power of enforcing the law to one person only; he proposed to give to the Lord Lieutenant, and to him alone, the power of suppressing any association or meeting, which he might think dangerous to the public peace, or inconsistent with the due administration of the law. The Lord Lieutenant was responsible for the tranquillity of the country, and therefore, the fittest person, in whose hands to vest any extraordinary powers, which the House might consider it right to originate on this occasion. Should it be necessary to enforce the provisions of the Act, he proposed that the Lord Lieutenant should be empowered to select any two magistrates for the purpose of suppressing any meeting, and requiring the people immediately to disperse. It was proposed, moreover, to prohibit any meeting or association which might be interdicted from assembling, or which might be suppressed under this Act, from receiving and placing at their controul any moneys, by

name of rent, or any other designation. This was the general outline of the measure; he thought that moderate penalties would be sufficient for the infringement of this law; and he considered that it would be by no means necessary to propose any measures of a penal nature. He was also decidedly of opinion, that the measure ought to be limited. The late Act had been limited to two years, he proposed to limit the present Act to one year, and the end of the then next session of Parliament."

The Bill passed both Houses without opposition, for although its provisions were necessarily somewhat arbitrary in their nature: the friends of the Catholics voted in its favour, as being part of a system which it was now generally understood was to terminate in the passing a general measure of emancipation. The Act passed; but the Association rendered it unnecessary to make use of the powers which it bestowed. Their friends in Parliament had advised them that, under the existing favourable circumstances, with the Government to a certain extent pledged to emancipation, their continuing to meet or act as a body would only injure their own cause. Acting on this hint, the Association, even before the Bill had completed its hasty

progress through Parliament, declared itself dissolved.

The Bill received the royal assent on the 5th of March; and on the same day Mr. Peel moved in the House of Commons, "that the House should go into a committee on the laws which imposed disabilities on his Majesty's Catholic subjects." In the interval which had elapsed between the introduction of this Bill, by the Right Honorable Secretary of State for the Home Department, and the time of its receiving the royal assent, short as that interval was, events and changes of very great importance had taken place in Mr. Peel's position as regarded his standing as a representative of the interests of the Established Church in the House of Commons. The high distinction of representing the first body of the clergy of England had passed away from him. He was no longer the representative of the University, he no longer spoke the sentiments of that learned body. He had attained that honor as the firm and unbending opponent of Catholic encroachments, as the determined supporter of the Established Church; and ably, faithfully and fearlessly had he performed his part. A new light had, however, broken in upon him in the course of a few

short months and he now felt convinced, as he states in the letter addressed by him to the Vice Chancellor, " that the period had arrived when his Majesty's servants must take in their collective capacity some decisive line with regard to the state of Ireland, and what was called the Catholic question." Upon the course which Mr. Peel felt it his duty to adopt on this occasion, the voice of public opinion has commented with the freedom which the importance of the question called for, and well justified.

The opponents of the Catholic claims, those who had heretofore been his firmest friends and warmest admirers, were now the most unsparing in their censures of what they did not hesitate to designate, his apostacy; whilst by the friends and advocates of emancipation his conduct was lauded to the echo, as being that of a profound and liberal-minded statesman, who possessed a sufficient degree of discretion to perceive that the best interests of the country called for concession, and feeling thus convinced, had liberality and strength of mind sufficient to induce him to sacrifice his own opinions for the good of his country.

In the midst of these conflicting opinions, however, Mr. Peel felt, that if the change in

the line of policy, which as a statesman, and one of his Majesty's principal and most responsible advisers, he had considered himself called upon to adopt, upon this most momentous question, was justified by circumstances, still, that having adopted the course he had done, he could no longer retain his seat as a representative of the University. Acting on that impression, he therefore, on the 4th of February, the day before the meeting of Parliament, addressed the following letter to the Vice Chancellor of Oxford, tendering his resignation.

Whitehall, February 4th, 1829.

" My dear Sir,

" I take the very first opportunity of which I am at liberty to avail myself, to make a communication to you which is most distressing to my feelings.

" I have considered it to be my duty, as one of the responsible advisers of the King, humbly to signify to his Majesty the opinion which I have formed, in entire concurrence with all my Colleagues in the Government, that the period is arrived when his Majesty's servants must take, in their collective capacity, some decisive line with regard to the state of Ireland, and to the various subjects affecting the tranquillity of

myself to be influenced by any other motive than that of an overwhelming sense of public duty.

" My present relation to the University will be terminated, but, believe me, that to the latest hour of my existence, I shall never be unmindful of the confidence with which I have been honored, and of the kindness and indulgence which I have invariably experienced; and that I shall study to maintain, with unabated zeal, the privileges and interests of the University and of the Church of England, notwithstanding the dissolution of those ties which have more immediately bound me to their service. I have the honor to be, my dear sir, with every sentiment of respect and regard,

" Your most faithful servant,

" ROBERT PEEL."

The result of this communication to the Vice Chancellor was the resignation of Mr. Peel. He was, however, again put in nomination, but was not suffered to be quietly re-elected. He found himself opposed by Sir Robert H. Inglis, who remained the stedfast opponent of the Catholic claims; and soon discovered that his own influence in the University had received a severe shock, whilst the supporters

of the new candidate were both numerous and influential; the contest was an obstinate one. Never were greater exertions made by the friends of the candidates than were made on this occasion. The united influence of the Whigs and the Government were used for Mr. Peel; whilst all the weight of the dignitaries of the Church was thrown into the scale of his opponent. Sir Robert Inglis was also much indebted to the zeal and active exertions of the parochial clergy; whilst many who were not otherwise particularly interested in the result of the contest were influenced by the popular theme which was spread and supported with great industry by the opponents of the Home Secretary, that, in opposing him, they were opposing one who had deserted his cause, and who entertained an opinion that his influence over the University was so great as to enable him to control them in their choice, and force them to return him as their representative in despite of a petition which they had but a few days before presented to the Lords against any concession, and which had been adopted by a majority of three to one in the most numerous convocation which had ever assembled in Oxford.

After a contest of three days, during which

1364 voters were polled, Mr. Peel was defeated by a majority of 146. Sir Robert Inglis, in due course, took his seat as representative of the University of Oxford. Mr. Peel had, in the mean time, been elected for the Borough of Westbury, where he succeeded Sir M. Lopez; and on the 5th of March, as has been already stated, he rose in the House in that character, to introduce that measure, which for twenty years he had been teaching the country to consider, as ruinous to its interests and its liberties, and which, even in bringing it forward now, he expressed his unaltered conviction, that it was a measure pregnant with danger to the constitution.

It would be wholly inconsistent with the plan of this brief memoir, to attempt to give even an outline of the lengthened debates, which took place upon the introduction; and during the different stages of this important measure, in its progress through Parliament. Mr. Peel's motion for going into a committee, was carried by a majority of 348 to 160. This unequivocal declaration of feeling on this subject was quite decisive as to its success in the House of Commons.

The House having gone into a committee,

and agreed to certain resolutions, a Bill founded upon those resolutions was prepared and brought in by Mr. Peel, on the 10th of March, when it was read a first time without opposition; it being generally understood that the debate upon it was to take place on the second reading, which was fixed for the 17th of March.

On the day named, Mr. Peel moved the order of the day, for the second reading of the Bill; upon this motion a warm debate, which occupied two nights, followed; the opposition to the measure was commenced by Sir Edward Knatchbull, and the arguments on that side were closed by Sir Charles Wetherell, the Attorney General, who had refused to draw the Bill when required by the Minister to do so. The learned gentleman, in an able speech, defended himself against the censures which had been heaped upon him with no sparing hand— "When I looked over the oath of the Lord Chancellor," observed Sir Charles, "as well as that taken by the Attorney General, and when I heard the Lord Chancellor declare that a Bill, such as that which was contemplated, would subvert the Protestant Church of England; it was my judgment, whether right or wrong, that when desired to frame this Bill, I

was called on to draw a Bill subversive of the Protestant Church, which his Majesty was bound by his coronation oath to support. If his Majesty shoose to dispence with the obligation of the coronation oath, he might do so, but I would do no act to put him in jeopardy. These were the grounds on which I refused, and would refuse one hundred times over, to put one line to paper of what constitutes the atrocious Bill now before the House."

The observations of Sir Charles Wetherell called up Mr. Peel to reply, who complained that the Attorney General's speech had partaken much more of personal hostility than of attachment to the Protestant constitution. Mr. Peel then proceeded to answer the arguments which had been advanced against the Bill, and to repel the remarks which had been applied to himself for the part he had taken in bringing the measure forward. "Let those," he observed, "who differ from me in opinion, consider the altered position of affairs in Ireland, since the annunciation of these measures of grace and favour have been made. To be defeated now, to throw the question back upon us, when a greater calm has been produced in Ireland than I ever knew to exist there—when there

is no spirit of vulgar triumph displayed on the part of the Roman Catholics, and in justice to the Protestants I must say it, when their disappointment has been marked by the most patient submission, to lose the advantage which we have now gained, and to reject the conciliation which is within our grasp, would be attended with consequences so fatal to the repose of the empire, that I cannot, even in fancy, bear to contemplate them. I am well aware that the fate of this measure cannot now be altered; if it succeeds the credit will redound to others; if it fail, the responsibility will devolve upon me, and those with whom I have acted. These chances, with the loss of private friendship, and the alienation of public confidence, I must have foreseen and calculated before I ventured to recommend these measures. I assure the House, that in conducting them, I have met with the severest blow which it has ever been my lot to experience in my life; but I am convinced that the time will come, though I may not perhaps live to see it, when full justice will be done to all parties, to the motives on which I have acted. When this question will be fully settled, and when others will see that I had no other alternative than to

act as I have done. They will then admit that the course which I have followed and which I am still prepared to follow, whatever imputation it may expose me to, is the only course which is necessary for the diminution of the undue, illegitimate, and dangerous power of the Roman Catholics and for the maintenance and security of the Protestant religion."

The division on this occasion was, for the second reading 353, against it 180—Majority 173. The whole number of Members present exceeded the number present on the motion for going into committee by 18; and, of these, 13 had been added to the minority.

The Bill subsequently passed through a committee, and, on the 30th of March, Mr. Peel moved the third reading. The motion was carried by a majority of 178, the numbers being, for the third reading 320, against it 142. The Bill was then read a third time, and on the following day, the 31st of March, it was taken up to the Lords, by Mr. Peel, and immediately read a first time. On the 2nd of April, the Duke of Wellington moved the second reading. The motion, after a long debate, was carried by a majority of 217 to 112. On the 7th of April, the Bill passed through a committee,

and on the 10th, after another long debate, the third reading was carried, on a division, by 213 to 109—Majority 104. On the 13th of April it received the royal assent.

On the 24th of June, Parliament was prorogued by commission. The Speech was read by the Lord Chancellor, from the Woolsack, as his Majesty's Commissioner.

At the commencement of the year 1830, the situation of the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet was one of considerable peril. The Catholic question had, indeed, been carried, but it had been carried by an unnatural and impolitic exertion of personal influence on the part of his Grace and the Home Secretary, and when the fervor of the moment had subsided, it was soon apparent, that instead of concession to the Catholics having strengthened the Government, it had produced the opposite effect. The carrying that measure had lost to the Ministers, who took the prominent part in passing the Bill, the confidence of many of their most faithful and influential adherents, who, considering their cause betrayed, were transformed from warm friends into the most determined opponents.

True, it was, Ministers had gained, in appearance, the support of their old enemies, the

opposition, but their friendship was interested, and wanted the character which alone could make it valuable, sincerity. The Whigs were content to give to the Ministers such support as would prevent the necessity of their seeking a reconciliation with their late Tory friends; they assented to a coalition in Parliament indeed, but it was with the expectation, by no means an unreasonable one, that their doing so would lead to a coalition in office. To make the Minister independent was, therefore, not their policy. The Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, on the other hand, were very willing to avail themselves of the support of the Whigs; indeed they felt that they could not have stood without it; but neither his Grace, nor the Secretary of State for the Home Department were at all disposed to admit their new friends to any participation of power or place. They would have much preferred a reconciliation with their old friends, and they flattered themselves, that, although difficult, such an arrangement would not be found wholly impracticable.

The party of which Mr. Canning had been the leader, and which, after the death of that gentleman, had acknowledged Mr. Huskisson as it's head, could have supplied the Government

both with influence and with talent; but the manner in which Mr. Huskisson had been expelled from the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet, left no room to hope that he would again join any Administration of which he was the head, unless his Grace would stoop to make submissions, which neither his situation, nor the unbending nature of his character would admit of his doing.

Thus situated, it was obvious to every one that the Ministers were without the means of taking any commanding position at the approaching meeting of Parliament. In the House of Commons especially, with the exception of Mr. Peel, they had not a single person of talent to fight their battle in debate, or to rise on any emergency to reply to any sudden or unexpected attack which might be made upon them. Under these circumstances, therefore, every effort possible was made to strengthen the Ministerial ranks, by availing themselves of the Whig talent and influence to the utmost. The Marquis of Cleveland, an extensive Whig Borough proprietor, under whose patronage Mr. Brougham originally entered Parliament, was induced to lend the Minister his aid in the Lords; the Duke of Devonshire was also prevailed on to

give his promise to adopt the same course, and Lord Darlington, the eldest son of the Marquis of Cleveland, undertook to move the Address.

Such was the state of things when Parliament met on the 4th of February 1830. His Majesty did not go down to the House, and the Session was, as usual, opened by Commission. In the Lords, the Address, moved by the Duke of Buccleugh, and seconded by Lord Saltoun, encountered a warm debate, and a division, when it was carried by a majority of 71 to 9.

In the Commons, the battle was much more obstinate, and the victory far from being so decisive as that which had been achieved in the Upper House. The Address, as we have stated, was moved by Lord Darlington, and seconded by Mr. Ward; an amendment was moved by Sir Edward Knatchbull. The signal for opposition to his former friends and colleagues, was given by Mr. Huskisson, in a speech supporting the amendment, to which Mr. Peel replied with considerable warmth of feeling. On a division, the Amendment was negatived by 158 to 105, leaving Ministers a majority of 53.

The proceedings on the Address were characteristic of those of the Session. On every

question brought forward, Ministers had to fight their way step by step. Up to the 26th of March, however, the Government sustained no absolute defeat, but on that day their Whig friends, who had previously fought their battle, fell off from them, and the result of that defalcation was, that the Right Honorable Secretary of State for the Home Department found himself outvoted. This occurred upon a question relative to the grant of two trifling pensions, one of £500 and the other of £400 a year, proposed to be given to the Hon. R. Dundas, and the Hon. W. L. Bathurst. The former of those gentlemen was a reduced Commissioner of the Navy, the latter a reduced Commissioner of the Victualling Department. The grant was opposed by Sir R. Heron, whose Whig friends gave their support to the motion; and Mr. Hobhouse, in declaring his intention to oppose the vote observed, that in this case the grant of the pensions objected to was indefensible; it was in fact a Ministerial job. One of the persons on whom it was proposed to bestow this grant of public money, Mr. Dundas, was the son of Lord Melville, at that moment First Lord of the Admiralty. The other, Mr. Bathurst, was the son of the Lord President of the Council,

Earl Bathurst. He would venture to say, that never had any Government before received so much independent support as the present Government had received; but that support must cease when it was found that the Pension List was filled with the sons of the Ministers.

Mr. Peel, in reply to the observation of Mr. Hobhouse, was ready to acknowledge to the fullest extent the support he had received, and was receiving from the Whigs. So far from being insensible of the value of that "independent support" most sorry should he be to lose it; and never to the latest day of his existence could he forget the conduct pursued by the gentlemen on the other side of the House on the great measure of the last Session. The manner in which they gave their support to the Government at that time could never be forgotten by him; and the conduct pursued by them on that occasion, reflected the highest credit on the political parties of this country.

In regard to the Pensions themselves, Mr. Peel did not seem inclined to make any vigorous stand in support of them. They were not, he said, the result of any Ministerial job, nor of any special rule of the existing Government, but were in conformity to the rule of former

Governments; and the intention of Ministers was plain, from their having stipulated with the Admiralty, that the gentlemen in question should be removed from the superannuation list on the first opportunity. Under the ordinary rule by which these matters were governed, it was a vote which Ministers were justified in laying before the House; but still it was only a mere estimate, which the House would allow or reject as it thought proper. The vote was ultimately rejected on a division by 139 to 121.

But although Ministers avoided falling into repeated minorites, it was evident the Government was dependent for support on those who had for years been its most determined opponents, whilst the aid of those who had been during the same time its firmest friends, and ablest advocates, was withdrawn; the public were not ignorant of these feelings, and among those impartial persons who were the closest observers of passing events there prevailed an opinion that a change was not far distant.

In the midst of these circumstances, however, Mr. Peel's attention was still directed towards that great and important object, the improvement of our criminal code; and in pursuance of that object, he, on the 1st of April in this

year, introduced into the House of Commons a Bill to alter the laws regarding forgery. The principal object of the Bill was to do away in a great measure with capital punishment for this offence; but Mr. Peel was not prepared to go the full extent which some contended for, and to remove at once the highest punishment from every degree of an offence, which was in its nature calculated to be, and frequently was, productive to innocent parties who became its victims, of the most extensive and irremediable ruin. By this measure he proposed to remit the capital punishment in all those cases where doubts attended its infliction, or where the complainants might, by the exercise of common caution, have saved themselves from harm; such as forging receipts for money: orders for the delivery of goods; forging stamps, uttering forged stamps, attempting to defraud by issuing forged orders for goods; the fabrication of the material of Bank of England paper, and forging deeds and bonds. On the other hand, the capital punishment was still to be retained in all forgeries of the Great Seal, and sign manual; in forgeries of wills, or on the public funds, of Bank or money notes, or orders for the payment of money; in short of all documents which

represent money, and are negotiable and transferable for it.

To a strong party in the House however, the Bill in this shape was objectionable as not going far enough. Many there were, and amongst them were Sir James Mackintosh, Mr. Fowell Buxton, and Mr. Brougham, who held the opinion that the punishment of death should not be inflicted in any case of forgery, or indeed for any offence short of murder; and on the third reading of the Bill, Sir James Mackintosh moved the insertion of a clause to carry out his opinion. This clause was adopted by a majority of 151 to 138. Upon this decision Mr. Peel declared he should relinquish all further charge of the Bill, and hinted further that the House would probably regret having adopted the course it had done.

The Bill, in its new form, was sent to the Lords, where it experienced, as Mr. Peel foresaw it would, the strongest opposition. The Lord Chancellor declared himself decidedly against so sweeping a repeal; and his lordship was supported in his view of the subject by Lord Eldon, Lord Tenterden, and Lord Wynford. The Lord Chancellor moved that the Bill should be restored to the same state as when introduced

into the House of Commons. This amendment was adopted by the House, and the Bill passed, and was sent back in its amended form, when Sir James Mackintosh proposed that they should reject it altogether, and it would then be forced on the attention of the House in the next session; in the mean time the Home Secretary, Sir James observed, would scarcely venture to recommend the execution of a capital sentence, looking at the opinion which the House of Commons had expressed. In reply to this observation, Mr. Peel declared, he would give the Crown such advice as he thought the interests of justice required, without reference to what might or might not be the opinion of a majority of the House of Commons. After two divisions, the Lords' amendments were agreed to, and the Bill passed.

At this period an event which led to most important changes in the state occurred: that event was the demise of George IV. His Majesty's health had, for some time past, been in a delicate state, but had not been such as to render confinement necessary, or to excite alarm, until directions were given to discontinue the preparations for the festivities with which the Royal birthday was to have been celebrated

at Court, in the month of April. The first bulletin, which announced that his Majesty was labouring under a bilious attack, accompanied by an embarrassment in breathing was issued on the 15th of April. The disease, almost without a symptom of abatement appearing at any time, continued to run its course; the constitution was evidently breaking up. The operation of puncturing the legs was had recourse to, and gave partial relief; but the royal patient became subject to violent attacks of coughing and expectoration. Death was more than once on the threshold, but his entry was arrested and the parting hour delayed by the expedients of surgical skill. Ossification of the heart, however, could have had but one termination, and that termination was rapidly approaching, when, on the 26th of June, early in the morning, the breaking of a blood vessel, during a violent fit of coughing, put a period to the mortal career of George IV.

From the first announcement of his illness his Majesty's death had become a matter of daily expectation with the public. During the latter years of his reign he had lived so much secluded from his people that his demise did not create so great a sensation as is usually the

result of the death of the Sovereign. There have been sovereigns more popular than George IV. was during his latter years; there have been many who have presented to their subjects a far superior model of moral excellence. In his youth he had been extravagant, and his self indulgences had been carried to an extent almost beyond all bounds; but his bitterest enemies allowed him to possess a highly cultivated understanding, and an elegant and discriminating taste. In his personal appearance he was the model of a Prince, and his character was not stained by any unprincely vice. On coming to the Regency, the Prince Regent gave a mortal offence to his early friends. The offence which he gave was one which they never forgave. He refused to make the companions of his pleasures the Ministers of his empire, and from the moment he announced his intention, no action of his life, public or private, was treated by them and their adherents with even an approach to candour. Every weakness and failing was dragged forth with unceasing malignity, while they seemed entirely to forget that it was exclusively among the teachers and apostles of their own tribe that his character had been formed, and that if he had errors they

were errors which had sprung up under their own tuition, and had been the result of their own bad example.

As soon as the decease of his Majesty was known, his next brother, William Duke of Clarence, was proclaimed King under the title of William the Fourth, and the new King, in the course of a few days, rendered himself, by the plainness of his habits and manners, and by the condescension and even familiarity of his intercourse with the people, one of the most popular of Princes. No change took place in the Government; he declared to the Ministers that he approved of their policy, and was determined to support them. But a change had taken place in the feelings of the Whig allies of the Government. They had began to feel disappointed, even previous to the late King's death, that no approach had been made towards admitting them to a participation of power; a new reign was now commencing, a new parliament was to be chosen, still no overture was made to them by the Ministers; so far from it indeed, it appeared that the Government were preparing themselves to enter the field at the general election with a view to conquest, and an anticipation of so far strengthening themselves, by the

result, as to enable them to meet the new Parliament, and to stand without the assistance of their Whig allies.

On the 23rd of July the session terminated with a speech from the throne. A prorogation took place; this was followed next day by a Proclamation dissolving Parliament. Each party made the most strenuous exertions previous to, and during the general election which followed; but on the meeting of the new Parliament, on the 2nd of November, it was soon evident that the elections had on the whole gone against Ministers.

The session was opened by the King in person, and the Address, in reply to the speech from the throne, was moved by the Marquis of Bute, and agreed to without a division, though not without comment on the part of some noble Lords on the opposition benches, in which situation the Earl of Winchelsea and other Peers, who previous to this time had been among the most strenuous of the Duke of Wellington's supporters, had on this occasion taken their places.

In the Commons also the Address was debated; and in the course of the discussion, plain manifestations were given of the united opposition which Ministers were to experience. The

announcement of hostilities was made on the part of the Whigs by Lord Althorpe whilst the discontented Tories were led on by Sir Edward Knatchbull. The Marquis of Blandford proposed an amendment, but it was not entertained by the House, and the Address was ultimately agreed to without a division.

The difficulties to which Ministers were about to be exposed by the opposition thus arrayed against them in Parliament, was increased by an unfortunate occurence without doors, which, by exposing them to a degree of ridicule, tended to lower them considerably in the opinion of the public. Their Majesties had accepted an invitation to dine with the Citizens of London, on Lord Mayor's day, at Guildhall; magnificent preparations had been made for their reception, and public expectation and curiosity had been raised to the utmost height, by the anticipation of a splendid procession and brilliant illuminations, the probable result of the Royal visit, when, on the 6th of November, a letter of which the following is a copy, addressed by the Lord Mayor Elect to the Duke of Wellington, laid the foundation of a disappointment of their high wrought hopes and expectations.

" My Lord Duke,

" From the situation of Lord Mayor, to which I have been elected, numberless communications are made to me, both personally and by letter, in reference to the 9th; and it is on that account that I take the liberty of addressing your Grace. Although the feelings of the respectable citizens of London are decidedly loyal, yet it cannot but be known there are, both in London, as well as the country, a set of desperate and abandoned characters, who are anxious to avail themselves of any circumstance to create tumult and confusion; while all of any respectability, in the city, are vying with each other to testify their loyalty on the occasion. From what I learn, it is the intention of some of the desperate characters, above alluded to, to take the opportunity of making an attack on your Grace's person, on your approach to the Hall. Every exertion on my part shall be used to make the best possible arrangement in the city; and at the same time, I feel, that should any violent attack be made in one quarter, any civil force alone might not be sufficiently effectual, and I should not be doing my duty, after what I have heard, did I not take the liberty of sug-

gesting to your Grace, the propriety of coming strongly and sufficiently guarded. I probably may be considered giving you needless trouble, but the respect which I, as well as every person, who really wishes the welfare of the country, must have for your Grace, and the gratitude we owe you, has induced me to adopt this course.

"I have, &c.,

"JOHN KEY,

"Mayor Elect."

Communications of a similar nature were made to the Home Secretary, and other of the Ministers; and at nine o'clock, on the evening of Saturday, the 6th, the following letter was received hy the Lord Mayor.—

Whitehall, November 6th, 1830.

"My Lord,

"I am commanded by the King to inform your lordship, that his Majesty's confidential servants have felt it to be their duty to advise the King to postpone the visit, which their majesties intended to pay to the city of London, on the 9th instant. From information which has been recently given, there is reason to apprehend, that notwithstanding the devoted loyalty and affection borne to his Majesty, by the citizens of London; ad-

vantage would be taken of an occasion, which must necessarily assemble a vast number of persons by night, to create tumult and confusion, and thereby to endanger the properties and the lives of his Majesty's subjects. It would be the source of a deep and lasting concern to their Majesties, were any calamity to occur on the occasion of their visit to the city of London; and their Majesties have therefore resolved, though not without the greatest reluctance and regret, to forego for the present, the satisfaction which that visit would have afforded to their Majesties.

"I am,

"Your obedient Servant,

"ROBERT PEEL."

To the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor.

A deputation from the Committee appointed to superintend the entertainment waited on his Majesty's Ministers three times on the Sunday; and the Duke of Wellington, in these communications, stated, that there was but one of two courses to be adopted, namely, the postponement of the visit, or, the alternative of bringing a large military force into the City. The former course was adopted.

The postponement of the royal visit, and the

letter of the Secretary for the Home Department, produced a very extraordinary sensation in the City. On the Monday, it was publicly announced that there would be no Lord Mayor's procession on the 9th; but that his Lordship would proceed privately to Westminster. It was further communicated to those most interested in the matter, to the invited guests, that the Civic Banquet was postponed. The effect produced by these repeated shocks, on the money market was extraordinary; Consols, on the Monday, fell in the space of a single hour above £3. per cent. The excitement in the city did not subside for several days.

The subject was alluded to in the House of Commons by Mr. Brougham, who called on Mr. now Sir Robert Peel, he having succeeded to the Baronetcy on the death of his father, (which event occurred in the month of May, in this year,) for an explanation. The required explanation was given, but it proved any thing but satisfactory to the House; whilst out of doors the public generally expressed an opinion that Ministers had exhibited themselves in a timid, ridiculous and unpopular light throughout the whole proceeding. Such was the position of the Government when they brought on the

question of the settlement of the Civil List for the new reign. The arrangement which Ministers proposed, was brought forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was however attacked on almost every item by the opposition, who condemned it as being in many of its parts extravagant in the extreme.

One point for which the opponents of Ministers contended was, that the portion intended for the personal support of the Monarch and his state should be kept separate and distinct from every other item ; by adopting this course, it was contended, a great evil which had heretofore existed would be avoided: that of holding out the Crown, in the public accounts, as being the cause of a large expenditure with which it had nothing whatever to do. In order to submit the whole of the expenditure of the Civil List to a thorough revision, Sir Henry Parnell, on the 15th of November, moved " that a select committee be appointed to take into consideration the estimates and accounts presented by command of his Majesty regarding the Civil List. The debate upon this motion was short. Mr. Calcraft and Mr. Herries, both members of the Government, opposed the motion, as being contrary to custom ; whilst Mr. Bankes, Lord

Althorpe, Mr. C. Wynne, and Mr. H. Sumner, three of whom, in other days, would have been found in the ranks of Ministers, now supported a proposition originating on the Whig side of the House. On a division there appeared to be for the motion 233; against it 204, being a majority of 29 against Ministers.

On the numbers being announced, Mr. Hobhouse asked Sir Robert Peel, whether it was the intention of Ministers to retain their places after so decided an expression of the opinion of the House? No answer being returned to his question, Mr. Hobhouse was about to submit a motion to the House on the subject, when Mr. Brougham interposed, observing, that although the question was natural, it was premature. Upon this intimation, the question was not pressed. On the following day, the Duke of Wellington in the Peers, and Sir Robert Peel, in the Commons, announced, that in consequence of the vote of the preceding night, they had tendered, and his Majesty had been graciously pleased to accept their resignations, and that they continued to hold office only until successors should be appointed. Sir Robert Peel afterwards declared that the Duke of Wellington and himself had decided to resign, not so

much on account of having been in a minority on the question of the Civil List, as from the anticipation of what would be the result of Mr. Brougham's motion for Reform in Parliament, which stood for the evening on which they announced their resignation.

Although the Tories had lent their votes to displace their old friends and colleagues from the Ministry, they had formed no plan, and they now took no step to insure any share of the succession. The King immediately sent for Earl Grey and authorised him to form a new Administration, of which he was himself to be the head. Lord Grey accepted the office, on condition that he should have his Majesty's consent to make Parliamentary reform a Cabinet question. In the course of a week the new Ministry was formed, and was as follows:—

Earl Grey, ...	First Lord of the Treasury.
Lord Brougham, . . .	Lord Chancellor.
Lord Althorpe, ...	Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Lord Melbourne, . . .	Sec. for the Home Department.
Lord Palmerston, . . .	Foreign Secretary.
Lord Goderich, . . .	Colonial Secretary.
Sir James Graham, . .	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Lord Lansdowne, . . .	President of the Council.
Lord Durham, ...	Privy Seal.
Lord Auckland, . . .	President of the Board of Trade.
Mr. C. Grant, ...	President of the Board of Control.

Lord Holland, ...	Duchy of Lancaster.
Lord Hill	Commander-in-Chief.
Duke of Devonshire, . .	Lord Chamberlain.
Duke of Richmond, . .	Post-Master General.
Lord John Russell, . . .	Paymaster of the Forces.
Mr. P. Thomson, . . .	Vice-President of the Board of
Right Hon. C. Wynn, . .	Secretary at War. [Trade.
Mr. Denman, ...	Attorney General.
Mr. Horne, ...	Solicitor General.

IRELAND.

The Marquis of Anglesea,	Lord Lieutenant.
Mr. Stanley, ...	Chief Secretary.
Mr. Plunkett, ...	Lord Chancellor.

During the remainder of the session there was necessarily a suspension of business in Parliament till the new Ministers, who had vacated their seats by accepting office, should be re-elected. Mr. Stanley the new Chief Secretary for Ireland met a mortifying defeat at Preston, where he was opposed by the celebrated Henry Hunt, who was returned by a considerable majority, notwithstanding the whole influence of the Earl of Derby and other Whig friends of the Government was put in array against the Radical Reformer,

During the remainder of the session no business of importance was done except passing

the Regency Bill, a measure which had been strongly recommended in the speech from the throne. The Bill had been introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Lyndhurst, the late Lord Chancellor, on the same evening that the Ministers sustained their defeat in the Commons, but its arrangements were adopted by their successors. A select committee was appointed, on the 9th of December, to enquire if any, and what reductions could be made in the salaries and emoluments of offices held during the pleasure of the Crown by members of either House of Parliament, and to report their opinion thereon; and on the 23rd of November both Houses adjourned to the 3rd of February, Ministers having declared that a long adjournment was necessary, in order to enable them to prepare the different measures which they intended to submit to Parliament, and more especially to arrange that plan of reform to which they had pledged themselves on accepting office, and by the adoption of which alone they could flatter themselves with the hope of retaining that power which a schism among their opponents had enabled them to possess themselves of.

While the Ministers were occupied in framing

the new Parliamentary Constitution, meetings were held in all parts of the country for the purpose of getting up petitions in favour of the measure. No difficulty was experienced in bringing forth, in all quarters, loud and violent demands in favour of the extension of the influence of the democratic portion of the Constitution. The revolution of 1830, in France, was the origin of the outcry for Reform in Great Britain; previous to that event Reform had excited little attention in this country. The spirit of petitioning had fallen into disuse; in 1821 there were nineteen petitions in favour of the measure presented; in 1822, twelve; in 1823, twenty-nine petitions on this subject were presented; but from 1823 to 1829 not one petition on this important topic was heard of; and in 1830, fourteen petitions were presented for Reform in as many different shapes.

It was under this state of things that Parliament met on the 3rd of February 1831. Ministers had hitherto concealed from the public view the plan of Reform which they intended to introduce. On the first day of the meeting of Parliament, Earl Grey stated that, although it had been a work of great difficulty, Ministers had at last succeeded in framing a measure

which would be effective without exceeding the bounds of moderation. It had received the unanimous assent of the Government, and would be introduced into the House of Commons at as early a period as possible: but although it was thus declared that the measure was ready on the 3rd of February, it was not until the first of March that it was introduced into the House of Commons, by Lord John Russell, to whom, although not a Cabinet Minister, this duty had been intrusted, in consideration of his Lordship having made, on many occasions, motions for partial changes in the existing state of the representation. The motion with which his Lordship concluded a speech of great ability was, for "leave to bring in a Bill to amend the representation of England and Wales." This motion led to a debate which extended to seven nights, having began on Tuesday the first of March and terminated on Wednesday the 9th of the same month. In the course of the discussion, upwards of seventy members delivered their sentiments. It terminated without a division, by leave being given to bring in a Bill.

On the third night of the debate, Sir Robert Peel, being loudly called for, addressed the House. He observed, "he came to the con-

sideration of the tremendous question with feellings of pain and humiliation beyond anything he had ever experienced in considering a question of this description. He was asked to adopt a new Constitution; not after a calm and dispassionate enquiry, but by an appeal to motives, to act on which would be subjecting his judgment to his fears, instead of controlling his fears by his judgment. Why had the King's name been introduced? Why had it been stated in another place that this plan had received the particular sanction of the King? Was it necessary from day to day to state, in both Houses of Parliament, that this measure was brought forward with his Majesty's express sanction? He held it to be no imputation upon his respect and loyalty, if he disregarded the intimation that the King had stampt the measure with the royal approbation; and if, as a Member of Parliament, he exercised his judgment, on the merits of the question, as unreservedly as if no such intimation had been obtruded upon them day after day. Next the House had been menaced with a dissolution—an event equally probable if the measure were carried, as if rejected. But he cared not whether the House were dissolved or not; and he would be unfit for the

performance of any legislative duty if he permitted any such menace to influence him. He cared not whether he were returned or not to another Parliament; but if he felt any anxiety on that head, he would go to his constituents with this Bill in his hand, and would plead special claims to their renewed confidence, on his determined opposition to it. He would tell them that the Bill had been brought in to deprive them of their constitutional privileges, without any allegation of necessity, without any case having been made out, and that he had opposed it; and further that he never would consent to deprive them of rights which the constitution gave them, and which they had innocently and honestly exercised.

"But he was told that he must adopt the new constitution as the only alternative to prevent civil commotion; he was to be scared from the exercise of his deliberate judgment by the apprehension of a threatened massacre; if it were so, which no man who knew the people of England would believe, let them answer for it who had preferred manifesting their abilities to destroy, rather than their capacity to govern. I, at least, am not one who has industriously laboured to excite the stormy

multitude, and employed all his faculties to foster discontent. I, at least, have never uttered the language used by the noble Lord in 1827, who found the people peaceful, quiet, and contented; and who complained that he could not rouse their indignation against the House of Commons, and grieved that they were so apathetic as to be deaf to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. I, at least, have never called for a list of Privy Councillors that I might direct against them the torrent of popular resentment, on account of the remuneration which they received for their services. I have never encouraged any body of men to display, under the very eyes of the Government, a foreign emblem of revolution. I have never been the person to excite the people to frenzy, or to spur on their indifference to an emulous competition in revolutionary clamour, If, therefore, this extraordinary measure, which common prudence would have forborne to introduce at such a crisis of our foreign and domestic relations, when every fresh cause of excitement ought to have been studiously avoided—if it should be defeated, I shall never allow that any responsibility for the consequences attaches to myself, or to those who have thought and acted like me."

Sir Robert continued — "He would ask, what practical evil had the Constitution inflicted on the country, to render it deserving a sentence of proscription? * * * It was in vain to say that this or that particular part appeared to answer no rational end. The question was, what mischief had it done? and what is its action as a part of the whole? Who would pretend to judge of the symmetry and proportions of the human frame, of its organs, faculties, and endowments, which fall so little short of angelic existence itself, by merely examining an isolated member or detached feature of the fabric when perfect as created? It was the form of Government to which all ancient wisdom, and all modern experience had borne testimony, and of which all that wisdom and all that experience proved, that no sagacity of any one body of men could bring it into existence.

"The House had already heard stated the opinions of our most distinguished modern statesmen; but one still remained to be adduced, and that one was, the noble mover of the present Bill. In the session of 1819, that noble Lord, when speaking on the disfranchisement of a corrupt borough in Cornwall, had said, 'that he would consider a general disfranchisement of

the unconverted boroughs, as a re-construction of the House of Commons altogether,' and the noble Lord proceeded—' Old Sarum existed when Montesquieu pronounced the Constitution of England, the nearest to perfection of any which the most enlightened States had ever before experienced. When Lord Somers, and other great legislators and philosophers who flourished with him, bore testimony to its merits, it was open to the same objections which have since been urged against it. And when Hampden lost his life, Rutland returned the same number of representatives as Yorkshire. He was not inclined with the pseudo merchant in the fable, to cry, " new lamps for old," and would not consent to exchange the instrument which had created so much national prosperity for a burnished and tinselled article of modern manufacture. Neither would he willingly throw our political system into the wheel on the chance of obtaining a prize in the lottery of constitutions.' Such had been the noble lord's judicious, and, at the present moment, seasonable warning against the danger of rashly departing from the practical wisdom of mankind during centuries of historical experience. If such was the line of argument of the

noble lord in the year 1819, he, in his lordship's language, would now call upon the House to prefer the solid, ancient lamp of the constitution, to the tinsel of modern sophistry.

" If ministers had felt it necessary to propose a safe and moderate measure of reform of some branches of our representation, he would most probably have acted on the views taken by some other members of the danger to be apprehended from resistance to any change, and have given such a proposition his support, as a private individual, though he might not have thought it fit to have originated it in an official capacity. He would not have objected to a measure for extending the elective franchise to some places not at present possessing it; but he could not consent to a measure, which in the words of its very mover, went to reconstruct that House; and, be the coosequences what they might, so wholly did he despair of being able to modify the noble lord's Bill into a moderate measure, less objectionable, that he would oppose the plan altogether; considering, if the noble lord's arguments were good for any thing, that the present Bill, sweeping as it was, could not be taken as a final one, but merely as a precedent to still more dangerous innovations. * * * *

But practical consequences were still more important than abstract principles; and one of the worst things about this bill was, its inevitable tendency to sever every link of connection between the poorer classes, and that class from which representatives were commonly chosen. The great characteristic feature, and the practical working of the present system was, that it enabled every class of the community to have a voice, in some way or other, in the election of members of that House. He did not mean to say that the franchise was to be extended to all the members of all the classes of the community, but, that the Constitution worked well from having in various ways an entrance channel for the broadest principle of popular representation. If it were proposed to him to make a selection between the franchise in force at Windsor, and that in force at Preston, he would not hesitate to prefer the former; but he would not therefore abolish the Preston franchise and assimulate it to that in Windsor, all he would do would be to take care not to select it as a model for his plan of extending the franchise to other places. Not so the present bill which would disfranchise all those open boroughs, the voters of which were not rated at £50, though no reason had been, or could be, adduced for depriving the

freemen of Coventry or the pot-wolloppers of their franchise. Would not the effect of this disqualifying principle be to affix a political stigma upon those not eligible to vote under the £10 qualification. He could not consent to the measure were it only on this ground; for he could not consent to the disfranchisement of two or three hundred of his constituents, which this Bill would effect. The noble Lord, Palmerston, had talked much of the great check which would be given to corruption by disfranchising non-resident voters; yet his Lordship represented the University of Cambridge! and what would his non-resident constituents say to such an arrangement. (Here it was intimated across the table, that this provision was not to extend to the Universities, on which Sir R. Peel exclaimed) "No! What! is this their general rule that has no exception?—the peculiar beauty of which is, that it applies unflinchingly, and without exception to all classes and places. What does it do? It makes an exception of a body—the clergy, the very men who least need an exception; while it deprives the less protected poor man of the privilege of voting, where he does not possess a house rated at £10.

"To the convincing fact, that the close boroughs

were advantageous, by bringing in men who had nothing but ability to recommend them, nothing like an answer had yet been given, though two had been attempted. The answer of Mr. Hobhouse was, that it was not desirable that men of splendid talent should be members of that House; that in a Reformed Parliament solid sense and integrity would be more highly valued. Now, on the other hand, he, Sir Robert, maintained that nothing tended more to foster the public respect for that House than the fact of its being the great arena of talent and eloquence, and that nothing would lower it more in public estimation than that it should be below the average ability of educated gentlemen. Mr. Macaulay, again argued, that the introduction of able and useful men was only an accident, and that the fitness of institutions must be judged of not by their accidents, but by their tendencies. Now he was content to judge by the tendency, and not by the accidents of the close borough system, and would maintain that the tendency was essentially favourable to the entrance of men of ability into that House. He had that morning turned to the names of from twenty to twenty-five of the most distinguished men that had graced

that House for the last thirty or forty years, and he found that with three exceptions they were all returned for boroughs which the present Bill would disfranchise. There was Mr. Dunning, Lords North, I. Townsend, Mr. Burke, Mr. Flood, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord Granville, the Marquis of Wellesley, Mr. Percival, Lord Plunkett, Mr. Canning, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Horner, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Brougham, Sir Samuel Romilly, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Tierney, Sir W. Grant, Lord Grey, and the late Lord Liverpool; all first returned for close boroughs and but three of them ever members for counties. This introduction, by affording the parties an opportunity of displaying their legislative abilities, recommended them at a more mature age, to places enjoying a more extensive franchise. And when again, from caprice, or loss of popularity—a loss so easily and frequently most honorably incurred – they were deprived of these seats, the close boroughs secured to the country the continuance of their invaluable services. Burke had been repelled from Bristol to take refuge in Malton; when Sheridan was defeated at Stafford, he found shelter at Ilchester. Mr. Wyndham having failed at Norwich sat for Higham Ferrers. Lord Castlereagh

lost his election for the County of Down, and was returned for Oxford. Mr. Tierney, when he lost Southwark, was returned for Knaresborough, and Lord Grey for Tavistock, when he lost Northumberland. And yet this system, working so advantageously for the public weal, so fostering of talent and statesmanlike ability, was to be destroyed for the sake of a new theory, and an untried experiment.

"During the last 150 years, England, under the protection of its mixed constitution, had stood the shock of a disputed succession—of long wars—of almost every evil which could befal a state. During that period every other country in Europe had suffered invasion and submitted to a change of dynasty, or been compelled to bow the neck to a foreign power. England, by the free hearts which her Constitution alone created and encouraged, had stood untouched. Did not all history teach us that the great danger of great nations, was the danger of a successful military Chieftain attaching to himself the affections of his legions, and being led by vanity to turn the arms which he had first employed for the defence of his country, to his own ambition and aggrandizement. Had not the present Constitution saved it for more than a

century and a half of military glory, from that unfortunate accident. The staff of Marlborough, the greatest chieftain of his age, had been broken in this country with impunity; and had not the baton of the Duke of Wellington, the most illustrious commander of the present age, before whose culminating star even the fortunes of Napoleon had quailed—had not that baton crumbled into atoms before the vote of that very House. All this had been done by the Constitution which we enjoyed. It had served the purposes of Government as no other Constitution had ever done; and, up to the present moment, no one practical advantage had been held out as the natural result of the proposed change. * * * * *

"We used to be told that retrenchment of the expenditure would be the first step of a reformed Parliament; but now, this reforming Government itself had already declared, that further retrenchment was impossible. We used also to be told, that reform was necessary to check the enormous power of the Crown in the House of Commons. That, too, was no longer repeated, and with good reason. Would any Member now venture to state it as his grave opinion, that any influence could successfully

contend in that House with the influence of public opinion! * * * *

"Let us," observed Sir Robert in conclusion, "remain content with the well tempered freedom which we already enjoy, and which we have the means of securing, if we act with ordinary discretion. I lament exceedingly that Government should have determined to agitate such a question as that of reform at this particular crisis; it would have been wiser in my opinion to have avoided these new causes of excitement; for, depend upon it, that by this process, throughout this land, the first seeds of discontent and disunion will be sown. In every town there will be a conflict—a moral conflict, I mean—between the possessors of existing authority, and existing privileges, and those to whom the existing authority, and the existing privileges are to be transferred. Oh! Sir, I lament beyond measure that Government had not the prudence to adhere to that temperate course of policy which they have pursued elsewhere. I lament that, if they did think it necessary to propose a plan of Reform in the present excited state of the public mind, they did not confine it within those narrow limits which are consistent with the safety of the country

and the dignity of their own characters. They have thought proper, however, to adopt another course; they have sent through the land, the firebrand of agitation; and it is easy so far to imitate the giant enemy of the Philistines, as to send firebrands through the country, carrying danger and dismay to all quarters; but it is not easy, when the mischief is done to find a remedy. In the present difficulties of your situation you should take care that you do not signalize your own destruction, by bowing down the pillars of the edifice of your liberty, which, with all its imperfections, still contains the noblest society of freemen known to the habitable world."

Such were the arguments which Sir Robert Peel opposed to the bringing in of the Reform Bill, and they were repeated by him as the Bill passed through its several stages; but although they were listened to with the greatest attention they failed to convince the majority of the House. The motion for leave to bring in the Bill was adopted without a division, and accordingly brought in on the 14th of March, when it was allowed to be read a first time without opposition. It was not certainly known why the opponents of the Bill allowed a lengthened

and keen debate of eight nights continuance to terminate without a division, but the opposition was divided and without a regular leader on any organized plan of operations. Ministers afterwards admitted that, had a division taken place, they expected to have been left in a minority.

The second reading of the Bill was fixed for the 21st of March when a debate, which occupied two nights, took place; no new arguments were brought forward on this occasion, the subject having been fully exhausted in the previous discussion of eight nights on the motion for leave to bring in the Bill. The House divided on the question for the second reading and Ministers carried the question by a majority of one only, the numbers being for the second reading 302, against it 301. This division, including the Speaker and the two Tellers, made the whole number of members present 608 one of the fullest Houses ever known to have been present on any occasion.

This division was in fact a defeat for Ministers, and it was expected that the Bill would have been abandoned; on the 28th of March, however, Lord Grey alluding to the subject in the House of Lords observed, " having gone so far, Ministers are determined to stand or fall by

this individual Bill, and we are committed to it heart and soul."

On the 18th of April Lord John Russell moved "that the House should go into a Committee on the Bill," upon which General Gascoign moved "that it is the opinion of this House that the total number of Knights, Citizens and Burgesses, returned to Parliament for England and Wales ought not to be diminished." The motion was seconded by Mr. Sadler, and, on a division, carried against Ministers by a majority of 8, the numbers being for the original motion 291; for General Gascoign's amendment 299. Upon this decision Ministers determined on a dissolution of Parliament, which was carried into effect the following day, by the King going down to the House of Peers, and, in person, proroguing Parliament. Next day a proclamation appeared, announcing the dissolution, and the writs issued for the new elections were made returnable on the 14th of June.

The elections took place under such circumstances of excitement as insured a favourable result to the Ministers; and, on the meeting of the new Parliament on the 21st of June, for the dispatch of business, this change was evident. On the 24th of June, Lord John

Russell moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the representation of England. On this occasion no debate took place, Sir R. Peel having stated that he did not intend to divide the House on the first reading.

The second reading was fixed for the 4th of July, and, on the order of the day being read, on that day Sir John Walsh moved as an amendment, " that it should be read a second time that day six months." The debate which followed on this amendment occupied two nights, but the arguments adduced presented no new feature, and, on a division, the motion for the second reading was carried in favour of the Ministers by a majority of 136, the numbers being for the original motion 367, for Sir John Walsh's amendment 231.

On the 12th of July, the House went into a committee on the Bill. The debates upon the several clauses in which Sir Robert Peel took a conspicuous share, occupied the principal attention of the House until the 7th of September. The 13th, 14th, and 15th of that month were devoted to a consideration of the report. The third reading was carried in a House consisting of only 171 members, and by a majority of 55, the division having taken place unex-

pectedly, and without a debate. On the question that "the Bill do pass," however, a discussion which continued through the 19th, 20th, and 21st of September took place, and the Bill ultimately passed by a majority of 109; the numbers being for the motion 345; against it 236.

The Bill was, next day, taken up to the Lords by Lord John Russell, and was read a first time without opposition. The second reading, which was fixed for 3rd of October, produced a long debate which terminated in a division, on which the Bill was thrown out by a majority of 41.

The loss of the Bill created a degree of excitement throughout the country which has not been parallelled by any occurrence of modern times. It was generally expected that Ministers would resign; to prevent their coming to that determination, the House of Commons passed a resolution, declaring the opinion of the House that Ministers ought not to resign. This determined them to retain their situations, and, under these circumstances, the Session terminated on the 20th of October.

The prorogation of Parliament from the 20th of October to the 6th of December, afforded to

Ministers an opportunity of arranging their plans as regarded the great measure, by which, as Lord Grey had stated, they were pledged to stand or fall. At the same time, had Ministers been ever so desirous of extending their recess beyond the time named, the reformers would not have consented to any further delay. Ministers were bound down by their partizans, neither to propose nor to accede to any Bill, less efficient than that which the Lords had just rejected. The political unions, the reforming clubs, and the reforming journals, pressed upon the Ministry, day and night, the necessity of urging the King to create such a number of reforming Peers as would render any attempt at opposition in the upper House vain. Lord Grey was told that if he hesitated to take that step he would be regarded, and treated as a betrayer of that cause which alone had given him power, and enabled him to retain it; and, as the King was supposed to be the great patron of the Bill, no one of its supporters out of Parliament doubted his Majesty's readiness to adopt any course necessary to insure its success which his Ministers might think proper to advise.

Under these circumstances, Parliament reassembled on the 6th of December, the day to

which it had been prorogued, when the session was opened by the King in person. His Majesty, in the Speech from the throne, recommended to the early and careful consideration of Parliament the measure which would be submitted to it relative to a reform in the representation: and in pursuance of that recommendation Lord John Russell, on the first night of the Session, gave notice of his intention for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the representation of England and Wales. Accordingly, on the 12th of December, he brought forward his motion, at the same time suggesting, that the most convenient course to be adopted, would be to take the debate on the second reading. Sir Robert Peel acceding to this proposition, the Bill was read a first time without opposition, and the second reading was fixed for the 16th of December.

On the night fixed, Lord John Russell moved the second reading, when Lord Porchester moved as an amendment, " that the Bill should be read a second time that day six months."

This amendment gave rise to a long debate, in the course of which Mr. Macaulay charged Sir Robert Peel with ingratitude to the present Ministers, who had so liberally supported him and his colleagues on the Catholic question.

In reply to the attack on the present occasion, Sir Robert observed, that, " The honorable gentleman had, in three different speeches on the Reform Bill, charged him (Sir Robert) with making an unworthy return to the present Ministers, for the support which they had given him on the Catholic question, and had now again come down " with all the sweltering venom collected in the interval." But what was the honorable gentleman's logic and argument; why that the Whigs supported the former Ministers on the Catholic question, because they agreed with them, and therefore that the former Ministers were now bound to support the Whigs because they did not agree with them. Or was it meant to be put in this way, that because the Whigs had supported him, when they thought him to be doing something which was for the good of the country, therefore he ought to support them in doing what he believed to be ruinous to the country! One of these two things, this reproach must mean; and the want of morality in the one was a perfectly fitting companion for the want of reason in the other."

On this occasion Sir Robert Peel entered into a fuller explanation than he had hitherto given of the circumstances which had induced

him to advocate the Catholic claims as a Minister. "In the month of January, 1828," observed Sir Robert, "the Duke of Wellington was called on to form an Administration, of which I took a part. For several years I had been most active in opposition to the Catholic claims, and I had taken that part on the ground that I much doubted whether the removal of the disabilities complained of would restore tranquillity to Ireland. In 1828 I was left in a minority. There were then circumstances which the time is not yet come to disclose, which convinced me there would be more danger in continuing to resist these claims, than in yielding them. My opinion on the subject was unchanged; for I had doubts whether the people of Ireland would be benefitted by the change, which would give a strength to dissent and power to the many.

"From time to time I found that the success of the Protestant party was balanced by the success of their opponents, and I thought it hopeless to maintain with effect a further resistance; but, at the same time, I thought there could be nothing more unfortunate than that I, who had been the most strenuous in opposition, should be the individual to undertake the settle-

ment of that question. It was not for the sake of any personal sacrifice I was called on to make —for I always expected that such sacrifices must be made—that I felt a repugnance to it; but that I felt I must necessarily lose the confidence of the party with whom I had so long acted; and I did feel it unfortunate that I, who had evinced the most decided opposition, should be the individual to introduce the very measure I had so long opposed.

"It happened that I was absent from London in the year 1828, and I wrote my opinion on the policy of settling the Catholic question to my noble friend; I stated, 'I have thus expressed my opinion without reserve, on the first great question of all—on the policy of seriously considering this long agitated question with a view to an adjustment. I have proved, I trust, that it is no false delicacy with respect to past opinions, nor any fear of charges of inconsistency, that will prevent me from taking that part which the present danger, and the new position of affairs may require; I am ready to do so, if it is absolutely necessary. I think there is less of danger in the settlement of the question than in leaving it, as it has been, an open question, by the effects of which the Go-

vernment has been, on many occasions, paralysed. I must at the same time say, that I think it would not conduce to the satisfactory settlement of the question, that the charge of it should be left in my hands. Personal considerations are entirely out of the question. I show this by avowing, that in case of necessity, I am ready to undertake the duty; but I think I could support the measure more safely, if my support of it were given out of the House. Any authority which it may be thought I possess, among the Protestant party, would be increased by my retirement. I have been too deeply engaged in opposition to concessions to make it advantageous that I should be the individual to originate this measure.'

" I did afterwards undertake to introduce a measure for the settlement of the question; but I remained till January 1829, in the belief that I should retire from office and give support to that measure in my private capacity alone; but it was made evident to me that my retirement, together with the King's opinion on the Catholic question, would absolutely preclude the satisfactory settlement of it. I wrote a letter to my friend, expressing an earnest wish to avoid undertaking the painful office.

"That was on the 12th of January 1829; but knowing the difficulties with which he was at that time surrounded, I said. "I speak without reserve. If my retirement, should prove, in your opinion, after the communication you have made, an insurmountable obstacle to the course you intend to pursue, in that case you shall command any service I can render"—The memorandum indorsed on that letter states, that the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops of London and Durham, had that day had an audience of the Duke of Wellington, to declare that they should give their decided opposition to the proposed plan.

"That circumstance made it impossible for me to retire. I had advised the King to concede the measure. I could not shrink from taking a part in introducing the measure which I had advised him to adopt; no other consideration on earth should have induced me to stand in my place and to propose it. But I believed, as circumstances had compelled me to believe, that a settlement of the question was necessary, and that my retirement would have been an insuperable obstacle to that settlement. I appeal to any man of honor, whether I should have been justified in retiring. I had advised the

King, and could I, when his Majesty said—" I have scruples—you ask me to make a sacrifice of them; yet you yourself refuse to make a similar personal sacrifice." Could I when thus appealed to, as a subject, refuse to undertake the task?"

Having given this explanation to the House, Sir Robert proceeded to repeat his objections to the measure, under consideration, and concluded his observations as follows:—" This Bill therefore, I shall oppose to the last, believing, as I do, that the people are grossly deluded as to the practical benefits, which they have been taught to expect from it; that it is the first step, not directly to revolution, but to a series of changes which will affect the property, and alter the mixed constitution of the country; that it will be fatal to the authority of the House of Lords; and that it will force on a series of further concessions. I will oppose it to the last, convinced, that though my opposition will be unavailing, it will not be fruitless, because the opposition now made will oppose a bar to further concessions hereafter. If the whole of the House were now to join in giving way, it would have less power to resist future changes. On this ground I take my stand,

not opposed to any well considered reform, of any of our institutions, which the well being of the country demands; but opposed to this reform in the Constitution, because it tends to root up the feelings of respect towards it, which are founded in prejudice, perhaps, as well as in higher sources of veneration for all our institutions. I believe that reform will do this, and I will wield all the power I possess, to oppose the gradual progress of that spirit of democracy, to which others think we ought gradually to yield; for if we make those concessions, it will only lead to establish the supremacy of that principle. We may, I know, make a supreme,—we may be enabled to establish a republic, full, I have no doubt, of energy,—not wanting in talent; but in my conscience, I believe fatal to our mixed form of Government, and ultimately destructive of all those usages and practices which have long insured to us a large share of peace and prosperity, and which have made and preserved this, the proudest empire in the annals of the world."

Early on the morning of Sunday, the 18th of December, the House divided, when the motion for the second reading, was carried by a majority of 324 to 162. The House imme-

diately after the division adjourned for the Christmas holidays, to the 17th of January.

On that day the Commons again met, and the consideration of the Reform Bill took precedence of all other business. The discussion of the several clauses in the committee, on the report, and on the third reading, were protracted until the 22nd of March; on which day, a motion that the Bill be read a third time, was carried, on a division, by a majority of 116. The numbers being: for the motion 355; against it 239. On the following day the Bill passed.

The Bill was sent to the Lords, and read a first time, without a division; but on the motion for the second reading, a long debate took place; and on the House dividing, at seven o' clock in the morning, of the 14th of April, the motion for the second reading was carried by a majority of 9. The numbers being: for the motion 184; against it 175. On the 4th of June, after several stormy discussions, the Bill was read a third time, and passed, and on the 7th of June, it received the Royal assent by mission.

As the time approached when the first reformed Parliament was to assemble, men's minds were directed with peculiar attention and an

unusual degree of anxiety towards that event. The result of the general election had been a decided failure as regarded the radical party, as the enemies of existing institutions were designated; and scarcely more numerous were the Conservatives. The great majority of members returned were the adherents and supporters of Ministers, and as there was scarcely a question which could arise, on which the Radicals and Conservatives could form a union, the Government seemed to be placed in a situation of perfect security.

Parliament was opened by commission on the 29th of January. Sir Robert Peel took his seat for the Borough of Tamworth. The first business which occupied the attention of the Commons was the choice of a speaker. Mr. Manners Sutton, the late Speaker, was proposed by Lord Morpeth and seconded by Sir F. Burdett. This proposition was supported by Lord Ebrington and Mr. Tennyson, and other ministerial members, and the whole body of Conservatives; whilst, on the other hand, he was opposed by the Radical party. And Mr. Hume proposed Mr. Littleton, one of the members for Staffordshire, and his proposition was seconded by Mr. O'Connell. A long dis-

cussion followed, which terminated in a division, when the numbers were, for Mr. Manners Sutton, 241; for Mr. Littleton, 34. Mr. Sutton was then led to the chair by the mover and seconder, and took his seat with the usual ceremonies; and the swearing in of members continued.

On the 5th of February the first session of the new Parliament was opened by a speech from the throne, in which allusion to the state of Ireland was made in the following terms:—"It is my painful duty to observe, that the disturbances in Ireland, to which I adverted at the close of the last session, have greatly increased. A spirit of insubordination and violence has risen to the most fearful height, rendering life and property insecure, defying the authority of the law, and threatening the most fatal consequences if not promptly and effectually repressed.

"I feel confident that to your loyalty and patriotism I shall not resort in vain for assistance in these afflicting circumstances; and that you will be ready to adopt such measures of salutary precautions, and to intrust me with such additional powers as may be found necessary for controling and punishing the disturbers

of the public peace, and for preserving and strengthening the legislative union between the two countries, which, with your support, and under the blessings of Divine Providence, I am determined to maintain by all the means in my power, as indissolubly connected with the peace, security, and welfare of my people."

In the Lords the address was moved by the Marquis of Conyngham, and seconded by Lord Kinnaird, and was agreed to unanimously. In the Commons the case was different. Those parts of the speech which alluded to the adoption of extraordinary measures for suppressing the insubordination which prevailed in Ireland, excited the alarm of the Irish members; Mr. O'Connell commenced his speech by calling it a bloody, brutal, and unconstitutional address; they might try the effects of Algerine Acts, but he warned them of the consequences that would follow such a course. Having denounced Mr. Secretary Stanley as the worst enemy of Ireland, he concluded by moving an amendment, that the House do now resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of the address to his Majesty. This amendment gave rise to a debate which extended to four nights in length, and on the fourth night was

terminated by a speech from Sir Robert Peel in defence of the course adopted by Ministers, as set forth in the King's speech, with regard to Ireland, and in opposition to Mr. O'Connell's amendment. On a division the numbers were, for the address 428; for Mr. O'Connell's amendment 40.

The first and most important subject for the consideration of Parliament was the measures to be adopted for tranquillizing Ireland. The Irish members had not concealed their desire to get rid of the Church Establishment of that country, as being the heaviest of all the grievances under which that portion of the empire laboured, and in this opinion several of the English members had signified their acquiescence. Ministers, too, whilst pressing Parliament to arm the Government with extraordinary powers, had declared their intention to remove existing evils, and more especially to deal with that which regarded the Church Establishment. In the mean time a bill for the suppression of the existing disturbances in Ireland, commonly called "the Coercion Act," was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Grey, and read a first time on the 15th of February. His Lordship stated, "that Ministers proposed the Bill

without applying for a committee of enquiry, because the evils to be redressed were so great and so notorious as to render enquiry superfluous." The Bill encountered no opposition in the Lords, the Anti-Ministerial Peers thinking the fault rested with the Government in not having had recourse to such a measure sooner. Some amendments were, on the suggestion of the Duke of Wellington, introduced in the committee, and on the 22nd of February the Bill passed without having produced a single division.

In the Commons, however, it had to struggle through a much more stormy course. The Bill came down from the Lords on the 22nd of February 1833, and the first reading was postponed to the 27th ; Mr. O'Connell giving notice that he should move a call of the House for that day. On that day, previous to the order of the day being read, the House was called over; and immediately after the call Lord Althorpe moved the order of the day for the first reading of the Bill. "Ministers," he said, "had postponed to the last moment the bringing forward this motion with the hope that peace, tranquillity and obedience to the law might have been restored without having resort to

extraordinary measures, but murders, robberies, burning, burglaries, cattle houghing, serious assaults, illegal notices, injuries to property, and every other description of crime having increased ten fold, and more within the short space of four years, Ministers had felt it imperative to propose the present measure, with a view to arresting the progress of these atrocities, and in hopes of restoring the authority of the law. The Bill had no reference to the collection of tithes, or any other political questions; its provisions were confined solely to measures intended to restore and preserve social order." An amendment was moved by Mr. Tennyson, "that the Bill should be read a second time that day fortnight; upon this amendment, a debate of six successive days continuance followed, in the course of which, Sir Robert Peel, in an admirable, and forcible speech, supported the motion for the first reading, which was ultimately carried by a majority of 466 to 89. This decided expression of opinion on the part of the House, would, it was thought, have prevented any further attempt at opposition to the measure, such however, was not the case, the second reading was opposed by Mr. Hume, and the House again divided, but the motion for

the second reading was carried by 363 to 84. Notwithstanding this overwhelming majority, the opponents of the Bill continued their opposition, and persisted in going to a division on every stage, and almost on every clause of the Bill. And it was not until the 29th of March that it was read a third time, the motion for the third reading being carried on a division by 345 to 86.

Another measure of the session of 1833 in which Sir Robert Peel took a prominent part, was the Bill introduced by Ministers for the regulation of the Irish Church; one principal object of this Bill, Lord Althorpe stated, on its introduction, was, to get rid of that unpopular impost the Church Cess. This object was to be effected by applying a saving of about £70,000 a year, which would arise out of a new arrangement of the revenues of the Bishoprics, and other Church property, to defraying that particular branch of expenditure to answer which the Church Cess was levied.

The plan opened by Lord Althorpe, was however, calculated to produce hostility from two opposite quarters, namely, from the Conservative opposition, who deemed that many of its arrangements and principles were destruc-

tive of the true interests of the Church, and from the Economists, Repealers, and Radicals, who thought that it still left too much of the Church revenues untouched. Sir R. Inglis and Mr. Goulburn declared their hostility to the Bill, which proposed to abolish ten Bishoprics, five of which were those situate in the most Protestant part of Ireland. The abolition of the Church Cess would, they also contended, only serve to put money into the pockets of the landlords. Mr. Ruthven, on the contrary, complained that the measure was not searching enough, that four Protestant Bishops would be sufficient for Protestant Ireland, and that such was the opinion of the people of Ireland.

On the second reading of the Bill, Sir Robert Peel took the opportunity of declaring his opinion of its principle. "He approved," he said, "of that part of the Bill which went to redress abuses; he approved of that part of the Bill which required that the spiritual duties of the clergy should be personally and scrupulously discharged; and, he approved of that part which provided for the abolition of the Church cess. He was willing to forego the claims which the Church of Ireland might have to that particular impost, because he was satis-

fied the Church would be willing to make the sacrifice, and by abandoning it, he was persuaded they would remove a source of constant dispute and litigation, whilst the pecuniary amount of the impost rendered it a matter of little moment. There were parts of the Bill to which he objected, but his objections might be removed in the committee. For instance, no Clergyman, he thought, should have a smaller clear income than £300 a year, and his income, though small, should be without deduction; this principle he would prefer rather than to give him nominally a larger stipend, but subject to deductions, which would in fact reduce it below the sum he had mentioned. He would not object to the diminution of the Bishoprics on the grounds taken by Sir R. Inglis, viz., that it was beyond the power of Parliament, and involved a violation of the King's coronation oath; but still the question was one of the most serious importance, and involved, perhaps, a violation of the act of Union. The Bill proposed to strike off ten of the Irish Bishops; ought so sweeping a measure to be entertained by the House without further and more accurate information on the subject than was at present afforded. The other great principle of the Bill,

the appropriation, or rather the diversion, of Ecclesiastical property to civil purposes, he must resist most decidedly. The argument was, that if the property of the Church were improved, the excess of that improvement no longer belonged to the Church; now he maintained that Church property ought to be held as sacred as private property; and in that position he was borne out by the declared opinion of Lord Plunkett, the late Mr. Canning, and Lord Chancellor Brougham. Then, if an improvement took place in the value of private property, was the Legislature to be at liberty to step in and apply the amount of that improvement to state purposes. The right of Church property was similar to the right of Corporate property, and, if they violated that right, they would by the same act weaken the foundation on which all Corporate bodies rested. And what were they to gain by it? If they were sure to gain the £3,000,000, which it was said would be the result of the interference, he could easily discover in that circumstance a reason for the votes of those who looked only to the end, not to the means; but he denied that a single shilling would be saved, after a due provision was made for all the real wants of the

Protestant Church in Ireland; for the first object to which the revenues derived from the abolition of the Bishoprics should be applied, should be the supplying those places with Divine worship which were not, at present, adequately provided for. No rash step should be taken in order to gain a mere temporary applause, but all their efforts should be directed to increase the security of the Church Establishment in Ireland. To maintain the Church of Ireland in its inherent purity, it was necessary to make provision for the decent and respectable maintenance of the Clergy. On this ground he rested his opposition to the measure—that if the principle of applying the additional value of improved Church property to state purposes were admitted, then the right to every kind of property might be invaded."

Such were the arguments advanced by Sir Robert Peel against the Bill, the debates upon which, in every stage, were carried on with considerable acrimony; the result, however, was that on the 8th of July, the Bill was read a third time and passed, by a majority of 274 to 94. The Bill was then sent to the Lords, where, after undergoing considerable alterations, an amendment, as to the application of the

revenues of suspended benefices, being carried against Ministers, it passed by a majority of 135 to 81.

The only other great measure of the session, of 1833, in which Sir Robert Peel took a part, was the question introduced by Lord Althorpe, for the renewal of the Charter of the Bank of England. As the foundation for the renewal of the Charter, his Lordship laid on the table of the House, a string of resolutions by the second of which it was declared expedient, that Bank of England notes should be considered a legal tender, if for sums of £5 and upwards. To this proposition, Sir Robert declared himself decidedly opposed. "It was true," he observed, "that Parliament should do every thing in its power to secure the stability of the Bank; but the question was, could an Act of Parliament give confidence? Could legislation compel people to think that paper was as good as gold? How happened it that people had confidence in the Bank of England paper? Why, because there was no Act of Parliament to declare it a legal tender, and to force it upon people. Burke exemplified this principle, when he said—"Your notes are current on the Royal Exchange, because they are not current in Westminster

Hall." People now had confidence in paper, because it was not encompassed with legal securities; but the moment the proposed Bill should pass, persons would no longer be satisfied with receiving any thing but coin for their cheques." The resolution was, however, carried by a majority of 58. The numbers being: for it 214; against it 156. This decision was adopted after Lord Althorpe had modified the resolution, by making it incumbent on the Bank to pay all £5 notes in gold, if demanded."

On the 29th of August the Session terminated.

The year 1834 proved in its results a very important one in the political life of Sir Robert. Parliament met on the 4th of February; and we find him taking a part in the discussion of almost every important subject which was brought forward during a long and very laborious Session. The limits of this brief memoir will not admit of going into detail on every question upon which he delivered his opinion; an enumeration of them as they arose must, in most cases, suffice.

In the early part of the Session we find him engaged in the defence of that excellent and venerable judge, Mr. Baron Smith, against

whom a charge of neglect, or incapacity in the discharge of his judicial functions, was brought by Mr. O'Connell, who moved for a committee of enquiry into the Learned Judge's conduct. The motion, in consequence of the Ministry having lent themselves to Mr. O'Connell, was carried; though Sir James Graham declared he felt it impossible to agree with his colleagues in the view which they had taken of the question, or, consistently with his own independence, to vote with them. Indeed the House appeared to have regretted what they had done, in as much as the Vote for the appointment of the committee, which was agreed to on the 13th of February, was, on the 21st of the same month, on the motion of Sir Edward Knatchbull, rescinded.

On the 22nd of April Mr. O'Connell brought forward a motion for the repeal of the Union. On this occasion, as on the previous one, Sir Robert opposed the motion of the Agitator, and his opposition was more successful, the motion being negatived by a majority of 523 to 38. Mr. O'Connell's motion, however, produced an address from the two Houses of Parliament to the throne, in which they declared their opinion that the union between the two countries should

be held indissoluble, and pledged themselves to support to the utmost any measures which his Majesty might find it necessary to adopt for its preservation.

On the 27th of May, this year, Mr. Ward, one of the members for St. Alban's, moved a resolution "declaratory of the justice and necessity of immediately depriving the Church of Ireland of a portion of its temporalities." The motion was seconded by Mr. Grote, one of the members for London. And was opposed by Sir Robert Peel; and on a division the motion was negatived by a majority of 396 to 120.

A question of great public interest as regarded the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge was brought under the consideration of Parliament, upon a motion brought forward by Mr. Wood, one of the members for Lancashire, who, on the 17th of April, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to grant to his Majesty's subjects generally the right of admission to the English Universities, and to equal eligibility to degrees therein, notwithstanding their diversities of religious opinions, degrees in divinity alone excepted." The second reading of the Bill was fixed for the 20th of June, on which day, on the order of the day being read, Mr. Estcourt

moved the amendment that it should be read a second time that day six months. Upon this amendment a long debate followed, in which Sir Robert Peel, in an able speech, supported the amendment. He observed that " this was an occasion on which the House ought to take an extended view of the question which they had to decide. But a short time since they had removed all the civil disabilities under which the Dissenters laboured, by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; they had given to the Roman Catholics a complete measure of relief; they had effected a vast alteration in the constitution of Parliament; and, at last, the question was, were they, or were they not, to maintain within the United Kingdom, an Established religion? In all the various discussions which had taken place, as well upon the measure of Roman Catholic relief, as upon the repeal of the Acts affecting Dissenters, the whole of the questions in each instance, were confined to civil and political privileges. There never was the slightest intimation that the removal of those disabilities would lead to further demands and lay a foundation for ulterior claims.

" Their warmest advocates, Mr. Fox and Mr. Grattan, never held the opinion, that when

the disabilities of the Roman Catholics were removed, and the grievances of the Dissenters redressed, the State should, in consequence thereof, be precluded from maintaining an established religion. To concede the demands now made, would not be for the advantage even of the Dissenters themselves; on the contrary, it would be eminently for their benefit, and for the benefit of all Christians, that the inestimable advantages of an Established Church should be preserved to the community at large, to protect them as well from superstition on the one hand, as from fanaticism on the other; and to secure to them and their posterity, the decent observance of divine worship, and the substantial benefits of toleration, which could be secured only by the inviolability of the Established Church. What constituted the union between Church and State? Wherein consisted the essence of an Established Church? Was it in the value of the living which the Minister held? No, it rather lay in the legislative recognition on the part of the state; and Parliament was entitled to say to the Dissenters, "With that legislative recognition you shall not interfere."

The motion for the second reading of the Bill was, however, carried by a majority of

321 to 174. The measure passed the Commons, but was rejected in the Lords on the motion for the second reading, by a majority of 187 to 85.

A discussion arose on the 11th of August, upon a proposition of Lord Althorp's, having for its object the relieving the existing pressure on the Agricultural classes, which afforded to Sir Robert Peel an opportunity of commenting with much effect upon some doctrines put forth by Mr. O'Connell on the subject of public faith. Mr. O'Connell in the course of the debate openly and boldly proposed, as a cure for existing evils, to attack the National Debt: "the wisest of nations," the Honourable and Learned Gentleman observed, "had ruined the currency one half, in order that they might pay with thirty shillings in the pound, money which had been borrowed at twenty shillings in the pound. Scarcely a man in the country, except the Fundholder, received one third of the income he had during the war—no man certainly more than one half. Why should the proprietors of the National Debt receive an income three times increased? Why should they receive three times the quantity of meat? The only radical remedy for the evils of the country was, to reduce the interest of the National Debt, to

strike off at least one sixth, and that would be a very moderate mode of dealing with it. Talk of the cant of national faith indeed! National faith, so called, was national injustice. We must at last come to the reduction of the interest of the National Debt; and therefore the minds of all persons ought to be made up to some such measure.

Put a stop to the existing evils by the only practicable mode; reduce the interest of the debt one sixth; and if at the end of twelve months that reduction should be found insufficient, come forward again and propose a reduction to a like amount." In reply to these observations, Sir Robert Peel "expressed his deep regret at being compelled in relation to the present motion, to vote on the same side with a man who could avow such doctrines—doctrines founded on an open violation of every principle of national faith and honor. He was not sorry, however, that the member for Dublin had avowed his political creed. When we come to consider the question of a repeal of the union between England and Ireland, we should be able to collect what political principle would be likely to prevail in the event of that measure being conceded. Oh! all you who are in-

terested in the public funds, all ye Protestants who hold lands, or other property in Ireland, learn from this indiscreet declaration of the learned gentleman, what you have to expect when you shall be handed over to the tender mercies of a popular assembly, in which the influence and principles of the learned gentlemen shall prevail. "Cant," exclaims the learned gentleman, "Cant," turning round and fixing his eyes on Mr. O'Connell. "I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word," you have decided the question of repeal of the union by this preliminary declaration. Know every man who has any property of any description—who has any interest in the national funds, that on such slender pretences of state necessity rests the doctrine which justifies a violation of national faith—a doctrine, under which, if once established, no description of property is any longer safe. Therefore, though I vote on the general question with the honorable and learned member, I cannot avoid expressing strongly my abhorrence of his principles."

In the course of this session also, Sir Robert was called upon to express his opinion on free trade; this was given upon the occasion of the presentation of a petition from Liverpool in

favour of free trade generally, and especially in favour of a free trade in corn. On this occasion he observed, " free trade in corn would be gross injustice to the owners and cultivators of the soil, in consideration both of the peculiar burthens to which they were subjected, and the protection which was given to the manufacturing interests. The petitioners," he observed " did not confine themselves to a free trade in corn only, but advocated the principle generally; and it was not difficult to see why such a proposition should come from Liverpool; but would the manufacturers in the large inland towns join in the prayer? They would be happy, no doubt, to see a free trade in corn, but he doubted much whether they would agree in extending the principle to articles of manufacture. The monopoly with which the agriculturist had been taunted, was only that sort of protection which was afforded to almost every article of British manufacture, by the imposition of a duty on importation of articles manufactured abroad. He had made a careful selection of every necessary of dress, as well as many conveniences and luxuries, and found that they all bore a duty for the protection of the British manufacturer. If the agriculturist

was inclined to purchase articles of foreign manufacture, he would find, in addition to the price of the article itself, the following duties imposed:—If he wanted to wear a pair of foreign boots, the duty was £2 14*s.*; on a foreign hat it was 10*s.* 6*d.*; upon his linen there was a duty of 40 per cent.; upon his wollen 20 per cent.; if his wife wished to wear a silk gown of foreign manufacture, she must pay a duty of £2 10*s.*; upon gloves 5*s.* per dozen was imposed; upon porcelain 30 per cent., upon glass 20; and upon gold plate £3 16*s.* 9*d.* per ounce. Even his walking stick was taxed; if it was the plain production it paid 5*s.* per thousand, but if the stick was mounted, painted, or otherwise ornamented, it paid a duty of 20 per cent. So that in every case, in which the English manufacturer could be affected by the import, a tax was imposed for his protection. The Corn Laws were only a similar protection to the farmer.

Such were the arguments used in 1834 by the opponents of the repeal of the Corn Laws, and it is by such arguments that their supporters still maintain their necessity. On the other hand the advocates of free trade contended then, as they do at present, that they

only tended strongly to prove that all prohibitory laws, acted injuriously upon the great mass of the people to whom justice could only be done by the repeal of all duties on foreign productions, and leaving the trade of the world open, free, and unshackled.

The remainder of the session was occupied in the discussion of the estimates, the budget, a plan for the reduction of the 4 per cents, discussions on the Reform Bill, and proposed amendments of that measure, &c., and on the 15th of August his Majesty terminated the session which had been a stormy one, by a speech from the throne.

For some time previous to the prorogation, it was evident that the situation of the Ministry had become perilous, indeed it may be said desperate, the first circumstance which occurred to shake Lord Grey's Cabinet was the resignation of Mr. Stanley, which took place on the 27th of May, in consequence of the turn which the debate on Mr. Ward's motion for the reduction of the Irish Church Establishment had taken in the House of Commons. Mr. Stanley's resignation led to the retirement from office of the Duke of Richmond, Sir James Graham, and the Earl of Ripon; and on the 9th of July,

following, these resignations were followed by one of still greater importance. On that evening Earl Grey, on rising in his place in the House of Lords, to move that their Lordships should receive the report on the Irish Coercion Bill, stated, that he was no longer Minister. In his explanation, the Noble Earl said, " that the resignation of Lord Althorp, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, which had taken place the preceding day, had determined him to take this course." By the resignation of the head of the Cabinet, though no other resignation followed, and although four days afterwards Lord Althorp consented to resume office, the Cabinet itself was in fact dissolved; Lord Brougham, however, declared in the House of Lords that he had no intention to resign, and such appeared to be the feeling of the rest of the Ministers, who instead of seeking for a Premier to construct a new Cabinet, determined to hold together and seek a new head; this determination they carried into effect without loss of time; Lord Melbourne, the Home Secretary, stepped into Lord Grey's place, and it having been arranged that such alterations as should meet and remove Lord Althorp's objections to the

Irish Coercion Bill, and upon which he had resigned, should be introduced into that measure, that Noble Lord was induced to withdraw his resignation, and to resume his ministerial responsibility as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Under these circumstances Lord Melbourne, on the 17th of July, appeared in the House of Peers as Prime Minister, and his first act in that capacity was to inform the House that Ministers did not intend to proceed with the Coercion Bill now before it, but that another Bill omitting certain clauses would be immediately introduced into the House of Commons.

We have already seen that long before the prorogation of Parliament, the weakness and vacillation of the Ministry had become apparent, from the moment of Lord Grey's resignation; the want of unanimity and consistency of action, and a total absence of decision of character had rendered them dependent for their existence on the support of the radical faction, and of Mr. O'Connell's popish delegates; and this support was so dealt out to them, as to entail on the Government the ridicule and contempt of the country. The very men by whose votes they were preserved from defeat, on almost every question, and to whose support they were in-

debted for their continuance in office, avowing for them only feelings of contempt. These feelings are apparent in the series of letters, which, at this time, were addressed by Mr. O'Connell to Lord Duncannon, puplished in the O'Connell portion of the press, in Ireland, and copied most extensively into the English metropolitan and provincial papers, and in which every species of abuse was heaped upon the Ministry and the Whigs.

These publications had the effect of greatly degrading the Ministry in the opinion of the country; and another circumstance which took place at this period, only served to hasten that dissolution of the Melbourne Ministry, which must, in the natural course of things, have soon taken place. The circumstance alluded to, is the death of Lord Spencer, which event occurred on the 10th of November, 1834. As Lord Althorp was by this circumstance removed to the House of Peers, it became necessary to find a new Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a new Leader of the House of Commons. Accordingly, on the 14th of November, Lord Melbourne waited on his Majesty, who was then at Brighton, to submit to his approval, the changes which Lord Spencer's death had rendered necessary.

The principal of these was the recommended appointment of Lord John Russell, as the new Chancellor of the Exchequer; together with which appointment his Lordship was to be constituted the Leader of the House of Commons. It appeared, however, by the result, that the King had formed an opinion on this subject, contrary to that entertained by his Ministers. His Majesty felt persuaded that public business could not be carried on by a Ministry, such as Lord Melbourne now proposed to form. He, therefore, at once announced to Lord Melbourne, that he would not impose on him the task of completing the official arrangements; but had determined to take the advice of the Duke of Wellington on the formation of a new Cabinet.

That same evening a letter was dispatched to Sir H. Wheatley, inclosing one from his Majesty to the Duke of Wellington, who, on the following day had an interview with the King at Brighton, when, in reply to his Majesty's communication of his wishes that the Duke should proceed to form a new Administration, his Grace strongly advised that the charge of forming a new Government should be

entrusted to Sir Robert Peel; and as Sir Robert had left England in the month of October, accompanied by Lady Peel and some other branches of his family, with the intention of spending the winter in Italy, and consequently that some days at least must elapse before Sir Robert could receive and reply to his Majesty's commands, his Grace offered to carry on the public business until Sir Robert's return. This course was adopted, and as a temporary arrangement, his Grace was appointed First Lord of the Treasury, and sworn in as one of the principal Secretaries of State; on the 21st of November Lord Lyndhurst received the Great Seal, and took the oaths as Lord Chancellor.

The messenger who had been dispatched to Sir Robert Peel arrived at Rome on the evening of the 25th of November, where he found the Right Honorable Baronet, and delivered his credentials: on the following morning Sir Robert left Rome, accompanied by Lady Peel; he arrived in London on the morning of the 9th of December, and on the same day had an audience of the King, and accepted the office of Prime Minister.

By the end of December the official arrangements were completed, and the following was announced to the public as the list of appointments forming Sir Robert's new Administration:—

ENGLAND.

Sir Robert Peel . . .	First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Mr. Goulburn . . .	Sec. of State for the Home Department.
The Duke of Wellington	Sec. of State for Foreign Affairs.
Lord Aberdeen . . .	Sec. of State for the Col. Department.
Lord Lyndhurst . . .	Lord Chancellor.
Earl Roslyn	President of the Council.
Lord Wharncliffe . .	Lord Privy Seal.
Mr. A. Baring . . .	President of the Board of Trade.
Sir George Murray . .	Master General of the Ordnance.
Sir Edward Knatchbull	Paymaster of the Forces.
Earl de Grey	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Lord Ellenborough . .	President of the Board of Control.
Mr. Herries	Secretary at War.
Mr. C. W. Wynn . . .	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

IRELAND.

The Earl of Haddington	Lord Lieutenant.
Sir Edward Sugden . .	Lord Chancellor.
Sir. H. Hardinge . . .	Chief Secretary.
Sir George Clark, Bart. Sir T. Fremantle Bart.	Joint Secretaries to the Treasury.
Lord Mahon	Under Foreign Secretary.
Rt. Hon. G. R. Dawson	Secretary to the Admiralty.
Sir James Scarlett . .	Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer.
Sir F. Pollock	Attorney General.

Sir William Follett . .	Solicitor General.
Sir William Rae, Bart. .	Lord Advocate of Scotland.
Lord Edward Somerset .	Surveyor General of the Ordnance.
Colonel Perceval . . .	Treasurer of the Ordnance.
Sir John Beckett . . .	Judge Advocate.

The Ministry being thus formed the country looked anxiously, previous to the general election, which it was anticipated would immediately take place, to be informed of the principles upon which the new Government was based, and of the course of policy which it was intended to pursue.

To meet this desire on the part of the public, Sir Robert Peel determined to afford it, through the medium of an address avowedly directed to his constituents at Tamworth, but which, in point of fact, embodied a development of the character and intentions of the Government he had formed. The following was the address alluded to:—

To the Electors of the Borough of Tamworth.

"Gentlemen,

"On the 26th of November last, being then at Rome, I received from his Majesty a summons wholly unforseen and unexpected by me, to return to England without delay, for the purpose of assisting his Majesty

in the formation of a new Government. I instantly obeyed the command for my return; and on my arrival, I did not hesitate, after an anxious review of the position of public affairs, to place at the disposal of my Sovereign any services which I might be thought capable of rendering.

"My acceptance of the first office of the Government terminates for the present my political connection with you. In seeking a renewal of it whenever, you shall be called upon to perform the duty of electing a representative in Parliament, I feel it incumbent upon me to enter into a declaration of my views of public policy, as full and unreserved as I can make it, consistently with my duty as a Minister of the Crown.

"Gentlemen—the arduous duties in which I am engaged have been imposed upon me through no act of mine. Whether they were an object of ambition coveted by me—whether I regard the power and distinction they confer, as any sufficient compensation for the heavy sacrifices they involve, are matters of mere personal concern, on which I will not waste a word. The King, in a crisis of great difficulty, required my services. The question I had to decide was this,

shall I obey the call? or shall I shrink from the responsibility, alledging as the reason, that I consider myself, in consequence of the Reform Bill, as labouring under a sort of moral disqualification, which must preclude me, and all who think with me, both now and for ever, from entering into the official service of the Crown? Would it, I ask, be becoming, in any public man, to act upon such a principle? Was it fit that I should assume that, either the object, or the effect of the Reform Bill has been to preclude all hope of a successful appeal to the good sense and calm judgment of the people, and so to fetter the prerogative of the Crown, that the King has no free choice among his subjects, but must select his Ministers from one section, and from one section only, of public men?

"I have taken another course; but I have not taken it without deep and anxious consideration as to the probability that my opinions are so far in unison with those of the constituent body of the United Kingdom, as to enable me, and those with whom I am about to act, and whose sentiments are in entire concurrence with my own, to establish such a claim upon public confidence as shall enable us to conduct with

vigour and success the Government of this country.

"Now, gentlemen, I say at once that I will not accept power on the condition of declaring myself an Apostate, from the principles on which I have hitherto acted. At the same time, I never will admit that I have been either before or after the Reform Bill, the defender of abuses, or the enemy of judicious reforms. I appeal with confidence, in denial of the charge, to the active part I took in the great question of the currency—in the consolidation and amendment of the criminal law—in the revisal of the whole system of trial by jury—to the opinions I have professed and uniformly acted on, with regard to other branches of the jurisprudence of the country—I appeal to this as a proof, that I have not been disposed to acquiesce in acknowledging evils, either from the mere superstitious reverence for ancient usages, or from the dread of labour or responsibility in the application of a remedy.

But the Reform Bill, it is said, constitutes a new era, and it is the duty of a Minister to declare explicitly—first whether he will maintain the Bill itself, and secondly, whether he will act upon the spirit in which it was conceived.

" With regard to the Reform Bill itself, I will repeat now the declaration which I made when I entered the House of Commons as a member of the Reformed Parliament, that I consider the Reform Bill a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question—a settlement which no friend to the peace and welfare of this country would attempt to disturb, either by direct or insidious means.

" Then, as to the spirit of the Reform Bill, and the willingness to adopt and enforce it as a rule of Government. If, by adopting the spirit of the Reform Bill, it be meant that we are to live in a perpetual vortex of agitation; that public men can only support themselves in public estimation by adopting every popular impression of the day—by promising the instant redress of any thing which anybody may call an abuse—by abandoning altogether that great aid of government more powerful than either law or reason—the respect for ancient rights, and the deference to prescriptive authority; if this be the spirit of the Reform Bill, I will not undertake to adopt it. But if the spirit of the Reform Bill implies merely a careful review of Institutions civil and ecclesiastical, undertaken in a friendly temper, combining, with the firm maintenance of established rights, the correc-

tion of proved abuses, and the redress of real grievances,—in that case, I can for myself and colleagues undertake to act in such a spirit, and with such intentions.

" Such declarations of general principles are, I am aware, necessarily vague; but in order to be more explicit, I will endeavour to apply them practically to some of those questions which have of late attracted the greatest share of public interest and attention.

" I take, first, the enquiry into Municipal Corporations—

" It is not my intention to advise the Crown to interrupt the progress of that inquiry, nor to transfer the conduct of it from those to whom it was committed by the late Government. For myself I gave the best proof that I was not unfriendly to the principle of inquiry, by consenting to be a member of that committee of the House of Commons, on which it was originally devolved. No report has yet been made by the Commissioners to whom the enquiry was afterwards referred; and until that report be made, I cannot be expected to give, on the part of the Government, any other pledge than that they will bestow, on the suggestions it may contain, and the evidence on

which they may be founded, a full and unprejudiced consideration.

"I will, in the next place, address myself to the questions in which those of our fellow countrymen who dissent from the doctrines of the Established Church take an especial interest. Instead of making new professions, I will refer to the course which I took, upon those subjects, when out of power.

"In the first place I supported the measure brought forward by Lord Althorp, the object of which was to exempt all classes from the payment of Church rates, applying in lieu thereof, out of a branch of the revenue, a certain sum for the building and repair of churches. I never expressed, nor did I entertain, the slightest objection to the principles of a Bill, of which Lord John Russell was the author, intended to relieve the conscientious scruples of Dissenters in respect to the ceremony of marriage. I give no opinion now on the particular measures themselves; they were proposed by Ministers in whom the Dissenters had a confidence, they were intended to give relief; and it is sufficient for my purpose to state that I supported the principle of them.

"I opposed, and I am bound to state that

my opinions in that respect have undergone no change; the admission of Dissenters, as a claim of right, into the Universities; but I expressly declared that if regulations enforced by public authorities superintending the professions of law and medicine, and the studies connected with them, had the effect of conferring advantages of the nature of civil privileges on one class of the King's subjects, from which another class was excluded, those regulations ought to undergo modification, with a view of placing all the King's subjects, whatever their religious creeds, upon a footing of perfect equality with respect to any civil privileges. In the examination of other questions which excited public feeling, I will not omit the Pension List. I resisted, and with the opinions I entertain, I should again resist, a retrospective enquiry into Pensions granted by the Crown, at a time when the discretion of the Crown was neither fettered by law, nor by the expression of any opinion on the part of the House of Commons; but I voted for the resolution moved by Lord Althorp, that Pensions on the Civil List ought in future to be confined to such persons only as have just claims to the Royal beneficence, or are entitled to consideration on account either

of their personal services to the Crown, or of the performance of duties to the public, or of their scientific or literary eminence. On the resolutions which I thus supported as a private member of Parliament, I shall scrupulously act as a Minister of the Crown, and shall advise the grant of no Pension which is not in conformity with the spirit and intention of the vote to which I was a party.

" Then, as to the great question of Church Reform; on that head I have no new professions to make. I cannot give my consent to the alienation of Church property, in any part of the United Kingdom, from strictly ecclesiastical purposes. But I repeat now the opinions that I have already expressed in Parliament, in regard to the Church Establishment in Ireland — that, if, by an improved distribution of the revenues of the Church, its just influence can be extended, and the true interest of the Established Religion promoted, all other considerations should be made subordinate to the advancement of objects of such paramount importance.

" As to Church Property in this country, no person has expressed a more earnest wish than I have done, that the question of Tithe, com-

plicated and difficult as I acknowledge it to be, should, if possible, be satisfactorily settled by the means of a commutation, founded upon just principles, and proposed after mature consideration.

" It is unnecessary for my purpose to enter into further details. I have said enough with respect to general principles, and their practical application to public measures, to indicate the spirit in which the King's Government is prepared to act. Our object will be the maintenance of peace—the scrupulous and honorable fulfilment, without reference to their original policy, of all existing engagements with foreign powers—the support of public credit—the enforcement of strict economy—and the just and impartial consideration of what is due to all interests—agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial.

" Whatever may be the issue of the undertaking in which I am engaged, I feel assured that you will mark, by a renewal of your confidence, your approbation of the course I have pursued in accepting office. I enter upon the arduous duties assigned to me with the deepest sense of the responsibility they involve, with great distrust of my own qualifications for their

adequate discharge, but at the same time with a resolution to persevere, which nothing could inspire but the strong impulse of public duty, the consciousness of upright motives, and the firm belief that the people of this country will so far maintain the prerogative of the King, as to give to the Ministers of his choice, not an implicit confidence, but a fair trial,

"I am gentlemen,
"With affectionate regard,
"Most faithfully yours,
(Signed.) "ROBERT PEEL."

At the conclusion of the year 1834, and the commencement of 1835, the political world at home presented a picture of great interest and excitement. The dismissal of the Melbourne Cabinet had surprised those who formed it, but as regarded the public generally, it called forth no expression of regret or disapprobation. The late Ministry, by the secession first, of Lord Stanley, Sir James Graham, and their friends, and next of Lord Grey himself, had lost all hold on the confidence and respect of the public. The seceding members carried away all the talent of the Cabinet, and left to the Melbourne Government only men of very second rate abi-

lities, many of them below mediocrity, not one of them rising above it.

Thus depressed, the Reformed Ministry had lost the confidence of the country, and felt that all chance of regaining power depended entirely upon their being able to regain the support of the Radicals, which they had forfeited. The Radicals also felt that they had nothing to expect from a Tory Administration, and that their only chance of succeeding in carrying their measures, existed in making a common cause with the Whigs, in their efforts to overturn Sir Robert Peel's Administration, and deprive him of power. An alliance was, therefore, soon arranged, the result of which was to give to the Radical party much greater influence than it had ever possessed before.

In his address to the Electors of Tamworth, Sir Robert declared, and of the sincerity of his declaration no one of any party pretended to entertain a doubt, not only that the Reform Act should remain untouched, but that he would always be found most anxious to remove real grievances wherever they were found to exist. The faith of the public in this declaration of the new Premier was strengthened by the fact of his having, immediately on his arrival in

England, made overtures to Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham, to induce them to afford their co-operation in forming the new Administration. The invitation to a coalition was declined, but, at the same time, no hostile feeling was expressed towards the new Government. On the contrary, both Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham declared, that, although they could not accede to Sir Robert Peel's invitation to join his Cabinet, they would offer no factious opposition to his Government. The invitation on the part of the Minister was, however, though not successful, extremely judicious, in as much as it gave an assurance to the public that the principles of the Government would not be hostile to the removal of real abuses; and Lord Stanley in his address to the electors from the hustings, at his nomination for Lancashire, alluding to the circumstance, observed "The offer was precisely such as could be made by one Honorable man to another. I must do Sir Robert Peel the justice thus publicly to state, that the communication and the offer, like every thing I have seen of his public conduct, were frank, open, and manly, and I have no ground for believing that he contemplated any insincerity or evasion; but still it appeared to

myself and my friends, that our public duties would be best discharged by declining the proposal." Sir Robert, thus disappointed in his attempt to include these two leading Conservative Whigs in his administration, was compelled to throw himself into the arms of the Ultra-Tories, from which party, as we have seen, his Cabinet was principally formed.

In the mean time, the elections proceeded with great spirit; there were more severely contested elections than usual; and on the whole, the results were favourable to the new Minister; though the additional strength they had acquired, it was soon evident was not sufficient to give them the preponderance necessary to enable them to carry on the Government with advantage to the country.

The new Parliament met on the 19th of February. The two Houses were opened by commission, and the Commissioners stated, as usual, that the first business to which the House of Commons would have to attend would be the choice of a Speaker; that having been done, his Majesty would then come down to meet the new Parliament, and to open the session in person. Thus advised, the Commons retired to their own House, and proceeded to

follow the course which had been pointed out by the Lords Commissioners.

The choice of a Speaker it was evident was to be made a trial of strength. The attendance of members was more numerous than had ever been witnessed, not only on the first day of the session, but even on the discussion of any great political question. Lord Francis Egerton, after paying a deserved tribute of approbation to the eminent qualifications of the Right Honorable gentleman, who for eighteen years, and during seven successive Parliaments had discharged the important duties of Speaker so greatly to his own credit, and so much to the advantage of the House, and of the country, moved that Sir Charles Manners Sutton do take the chair. The motion was seconded by Sir Charles Burrell. When Mr. Dennison, the member for Surrey, proposed, that the Right Honorable James Abercromby should be called to the office of Speaker. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ord.

Upon this motion a long and animated discussion followed, in the course of which Sir Robert Peel addressed the House in support of Lord F. Egerton's motion. In the course of an animated and able speech, he observed :—

"Not in the least doubting the right of the House to refuse to re-appoint the late Speaker, the question is whether such a refusal is fair and just, not towards the individual alone, but towards the House. Is the House called upon by a sense of fitness, or justice, to choose any other person in the place of him who has received his appointment by the almost unanimous sanction of six Parliaments—who has served the House of Commons for eighteen years—against whom every charge has been abandoned —whose health permits him again to undertake the office, and who is willing, without the possibility of his being actuated by any motive of personal interest, to continue in the performance of its duties? Will the House allow their late Speaker to suffer by six weeks of uncontradicted calumnies against him,* uncontradicted by himself, or by his authority, until that day, and which calumnies, and not a sense of his unfitness for the office, had raised a feeling against him amongst the constituents of some Honorable members? * * *

* It was alleged that Sir C. M. Sutton had by his influence with his Majesty, contributed to the dismissal of Lord Melbourne's administration, and busied himself in the formation of Sir Robert Peel's.

Something had been said about a " public principle," involved in the decision of the present question. Now, what are the arguments advanced in support of this proposition? —One Honorable Member said, ' that the Speaker ought to represent the opinion of the majority of the House.' Is that a good principle to establish? Is it wise or conducive to the dignity and just station of the chair, that its possessor should ever be seeking favor with the political majority, in order to secure his re-election? Is it not much wiser to look at the qualifications of the individual to fill the office for which he is proposed, than to consider his political opinions? But that question has been decided by the first Reformed Parliament. Earl Grey and his adherents, having a great majority, thought it right to elect the Right Honorable gentleman, though differing from them on political principles, whom some of the same party now oppose. They had the power then to enforce their opinions; and why did they depart from what they now call a great principle, and wish so urgently to carry into effect? The first decision of the first Reformed Parliament carries with it this conclusion, that the House did not feel itself called upon to

elect a Speaker, whose political opinions were in accordance with those of the majority of its members. But what is the explanation given by the noble Lord? The noble Lord says—'We wanted to avail ourselves of the advantages of the Right Honorable gentlemen's character, judgment, abilities and experience, and therefore we elected him.' But he has served their turn; he has done their work; he has answered their object; and, (with singular ingratitude, I must say,) they would now dismiss him, after they have established the principle of electing a Speaker, not of their own political opinions, when they had the power of doing so. After they have availed themselves of his services, and after he has co-operated with them in establishing the character of the first Reformed Parliament for decorum, they would unfairly take the very first opportunity to subject him to disgrace. ["*No, no.*"] No, no, indeed, for no disgrace could be heaped upon a man, who has conscientiously done his duty. It is beyond the reach of a majority to do that; but it is not beyond the reach of a majority to injure the character of the House.

* * * * *

"I resist, therefore, the motion of the Hon-

orable member for Surrey, not only on individual and personal, but on general grounds; and as the office in question is the only one which the House has the power of bestowing, let us make such a selection as will be in accordance with the examples which both the unreformed and the reformed House have afforded us. The only objection of a personal nature made by the noble Lord to the appointment of my Right Honorable friend is, that he attended some three or four privy councils which were purely of a formal character. That one charge is to invalidate the impartiality, dignity, ability, and experience practised during eighteen years. But what is the nature of this charge? If it is not fitting that the Speaker of this House should be a privy counsellor, let there be a regulation to that effect; but if he be one, why should he be blamed for performing the duties of the office? An erroneous opinion is entertained by a part of the public that the meetings of the privy council which have been referred to were deliberative assemblies. The noble Lord opposite, also, is quite mistaken when he says that they were attended only by members of the Cabinet. Any members of the council, not members of the Cabinet, may attend, and they

frequently do so. Their duty is merely Ministerial, and they offer not a word of advice to the Sovereign. If the Speaker were in London, living in the house assigned to him for a residence by his Majesty, and received a summons to attend a privy council, on what ground is he to refuse to perform his duty? The charge respecting the late Speaker attending councils is not worthy of one moment's attention, after his solemn disclaimer that he had been directly or indirectly a party to the dismissal of the late Government, the formation of the present, or the dissolution of Parliament. For my part, I will give my vote in favour of my Right Honorable friend, of whose experience and ability I have had so many proofs. I implore Honorable members to consider that the office of Speaker is one which ought not to be made the subject of party feeling. The precincts of the chair ought not to be converted into ground on which political battles may be fought. I oppose the appointment of the Right Honorable member for Edinburgh, not because I have any doubt with respect to his qualifications for the office of Speaker, but on the double ground—first, that the qualifications of my Right Honorable friend are superior, from his long practice and

experience; and, secondly, because I think that his supersession would be unjust towards him individually, and have a tendency to disparage the authority of the chair, and the House of Commons itself."

On the division which followed the debate, the numbers were:—

For Mr. Abercromby	316
For Sir C. M. Sutton	306
Majority in favour of the former	10

This majority, trifling as it was, was the first fruits of the treaty of alliance between the Whigs and the Radicals, since distinguished by the appellation of "the O'Connell Tail." Without the Irish members, who followed in Mr. O'Connell's train, all the efforts of the opposition to carry the election would have been vain. The English members divided 247 for Sir C. M. Sutton, and 224 for Mr. Abercromby. The former had 88 county members, the latter 53; of the Scotch members 31 voted for Mr. Abercromby, and 18 for Sir Charles Sutton, still leaving the latter in a majority of 10. But then came the Irish members, giving to Mr. Abercromby 61 votes, and to Sir Charles Sutton

41: thus leaving a majority of 10 for Mr. Abercromby.

From this period the fate of Sir Robert's Administration was decided; the first blow in this great struggle, as has frequently been seen illustrated in contests of minor importance, secured the victory to the opposition. On the 24th of February the session was opened by his Majesty in person, with a speech from the throne. The address in reply to the speech was moved in the Lords by the Earl of Hardwicke, and seconded by Lord Gage. An amendment was moved by Lord Melbourne, but it was negatived without a division, and the address was agreed to.

Far different was the course adopted in the Commons. The address in that House was moved by Lord Sandon and seconded by Mr. Bramston. An amendment was moved by Lord Morpeth; and the debate which followed upon it was continued through the nights of the 24th 25th and 26th, when it terminated in a division. The numbers were, for the amendment 309; for the original address 302; majority against the Ministers 7.

In the debate on the address, Sir Robert Peel had declared that, even an unfavourable

decision would not induce him to resign; and the smallness of the majority confirmed him in that resolution. Indeed the amendment itself, was not of a character which called upon Ministers to consider its adoption, by the House, as a declaration of want of confidence in the Government. In regard to the past, it censured the dissolution as uncalled for; and as regarded the future, it expressed a hope that the Municipal Corporations would be placed under vigilant controul; that the undoubted grievances of the Dissenters would be redressed, and that the abuses which existed both in the English and Irish Church would be removed. In these objects Sir Robert had declared in his address to the electors of Tamworth, his concurrence, and it was evident the House was not so constituted as to allow Ministers to be ejected, merely because the King had brought them in without regard to the policy which they were to pursue: their antagonists felt themselves compelled to wait for the measures which should be brought forward, and to try their strength as opportunity might offer. The struggle on the address was therefore followed by a sort of armistice, during which, however, suspicions were insinuated, and doubts were

sought to be raised by agitating topics, or urging questions and pressing for answers upon points in which it was hoped those answers would be such as would render Ministers unpopular.

Such was the position of parties at the commencement of the session of 1835. The first symptom of decided hostility was shewn by Mr. Hume, who, on the 2nd of March, stated, that, after the House had declared its opinion on two important questions, Ministers ought no longer to hold their places, but should resign immediately, gave notice that on the House going into a committee of supply he should move that the grant be limited to a supply for three months; the manner in which this notice was received by the House was such, however, as induced the Honorable member to withdraw it before the time arrived for bringing on the discussion.

The first regular attack against which Ministers were called on to defend themselves, was one in which the assailants were led on by an individual, the personal friend and supporter of the Ministry on general principles, the Marquis of Chandos, who on the 10th of March moved a resolution "that it is expedient that the present duties on Malt shall altogether cease and

determine." Upon this proposition a long debate followed, which terminated in a division, when there appeared for the Marquis of Chandos's motion 192, against it 350, majority 158. On this occasion Sir Robert had the support of a great majority of the opposition with him.

Notwithstanding the heavy weight of business which must necessarily have pressed upon Sir Robert's mind as Prime Minister of this great empire, we find the subject to which he had previously devoted so much of his time and attention, and with results so beneficial to the public, we allude to the reform introduced by him into our system of law both civil and criminal, still occupying his mind and engaging his attention. Accordingly with a view to carrying this object still further than heretofore, the Attorney General, on the 12th of March, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to improve the administration of justice in Ecclesiastical Courts. He said, that the leading object of this bill was to consolidate some 300 or 400 courts, which were dispersed all over the country, and which were incompetent to perform those functions of justice which had been assigned to them, and to concentrate the jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters in one court, to sit either

in London or wherever his Majesty should be pleased to appoint.

Dr. Lushington, Sir John Campbell, Dr. Nicholl, and Mr. Cutlar Fergusson having expressed their approbation of the principle of the proposed measure, Sir Robert rose, and in the course of an able speech in support of the measure observed:—

"I trust, that this House will receive the present measure as the first practical fulfilment of the pledges given in his Majesty's speech from the Throne, that his Majesty's Ministers were desirous of introducing into the administration of the law the most substantial reforms, and of redressing every grievance, of which just complaint can be made. I do hope, that it was some kind of prognostication of the nature of those reforms, which convinced the Honourable member for Middlesex, that it was not necessary to hold over his Majesty's Ministers the menace of limited supplies. The Honourable member will see in the strong and uniform testimony borne to the efficacy of this reform, a guarantee of the intention of his Majesty's Ministers, with respect to reforms in general." * * *

"With respect to the particular measure before the House, I go further, much further,

than some of those Honourable gentlemen who claim to themselves the title of Reformers. The Honorable gentleman, the member for Cambridge, (Mr. Pryme,) advises that the Local Ecclesiastical Courts should be continued in existence, while the whole object of the present bill is to put an end to these local courts. Another Honorable and Learned member (Sir J. Campbell) has said that the Diocesan Courts should be continued, lest the country attorneys might petition the House, and oppose the Bill, through the medium of country gentleman, whom they may be able to influence. Why, Sir, I am a greater Reformer, than even his Majesty's late Attorney-General. If the local jurisdiction be good, maintain it; if bad, for God's sake, don't let us permit local attorneys, for their private and personal interests, to obstruct the course of Reform. If the country attorneys have any vested rights, any vested interests in the maintenance of these courts, let us compensate them; but if it be useful, if it be for the benefit of the country at large, that central courts shall be established, and that local courts be abolished, what grounds have country solicitors to obstruct the course of Reform? I know that the country solicitors

are a powerful body; but if the present measure be right, if centralisation be more advantageous to the country than the continuance of local jurisdiction, I see no earthly reason why the power of the country solicitors should impede the progress of Reform.

"I am one of those who think that the jurisdiction of Parliament ought to be trusted and relied upon. Most undoubtedly, no one can witness, with any degree of satisfaction, the examination of witnesses at the bar of this House on occasion of proceedings for divorce; but still, I think, that such a course is not without an indirect effect upon the public mind and morals. I am not of opinion that an easy mode of obtaining divorce would be attended with much advantage, nor am I that great admirer of the Scotch system, in this respect, that some honorable members profess to be. I very much doubt, indeed, that it would be at all for the public benefit that local courts should have the jurisdiction of granting divorce *a mensa et thoro*. Such facilities would not be unlikely to lead to much collusion, particularly where females were concerned. The greatest confidence should exist in any tribunal possessing a jurisdiction of this nature, and too much

care cannot be taken in the establishment of such a court.

"I should be doing great injustice to Sir John Nicholl, and Sir Herbert Jenner, if I did not take this occasion to acknowledge the prompt, willing, and efficient assistance I derived from those learned and distinguished civilians, as members of the commission, voluntarily tendered immediately on my return from abroad and my appointment to office. Am I not, then, justified in saying, that where effectual reform is seen to be necessary, there is no indisposition in the highest authorities of the country to give their assistance towards so desirable an end. I entirely agree with those who feel that there never can be a perfect system of law reform established, until all judicial sinecures shall have been destroyed. In any measures intended to be effective, provision must be made to abolish judicial sinecures. I, myself, introduced a Bill to destroy those abuses, and I believe with no little success and benefit; but, if any still remain uncorrected, I will give my support to any Bill, the object of which may be to render as pure as possible every thing connected with the administration of justice."

The Bill was brought in and passed, but these

gleamings of sunshine were deceptious, and of short duration, and it became daily more evident that the coalition of the Whigs with the O'Connell party formed an opposition too powerful for the Government, and which would, if upon no other subject, whenever those great questions connected with the Irish Church were brought forward, have the effect of overturning it. In the mean time the Ministers were subjected to a discomfiture in a quarter in which they had not anticipated it.

Among the diplomatic changes which took place on the accession of the new Ministry, the embassy to St. Petersburgh had been destined for the Marquis of Londonderry; some of the Journals, even amongst those devoted to the Ministry, spoke very freely and unfavorably of this appointment, and the opposition determined to make it a new point of attack on the Government. In pursuance of this determination, Mr. Shiel, on the 13th of March, moved "an address to his Majesty for a copy of any appointment, made within the last four months of an Ambassador from the Court of London to St. Petersburgh, and of the salary and emoluments attached to such embassy." This motion was made the medium, not only of attack upon

Lord Londonderry's appointment, but upon the whole system of foreign policy, which the Government seemed disposed to adopt. Sir Robert Peel defended the appointment of the Noble Marquis, and in the course of his address observed, " If the Honorable gentleman shall think it expedient to make a precedent to interpose a negative between the exercise of the King's prerogative, and to establish it with respect to the appointment of an Ambassador, the House may rest assured, that the precedent will not stop there; but that it will be acted upon in the case of every appointment that a powerful minority may choose to question—[Cries of a " Majority"]—Well, if it were a strong majority, *à fortiori* the constitutional objection to this course of proceeding was still stronger. I have no wish, I can assure honorable gentlemen opposite, to underrate their force; but if they are a majority, still it will be an infinitely better course for them to exert their power in an attack on the Ministers—to ask the Crown to remove them—to declare their entire want of confidence in those Ministers, and address the Crown for their removal—it will surely be better, infinitely, for the majority to take that course than to lower the prerogative

of the Crown by assuming undue powers, and interfering with those which properly belong to the Crown. But whether I am in a majority or a minority, this House shall never find me disposed to withhold any information which I can give on any question, which I can answer consistently with my public duty! nor will I hesitate now to say that notwithstanding the speeches of to-night, I am not prepared to advise the Crown to cancel the appointment."

In reply, Mr. Shiel said "that in order to meet the wishes of the House, as he understood from the Right Honorable Baronet that the appointment of the noble Marquis had not been as yet completed, and, therefore, that the document for which he had moved was not in a state to be laid before the House, he should withdraw his motion, satisfied that after the discussion of that night the noble Marquis himself would, in compliance with the feeling of the country, resign at once the appointment to which he had been named."

This anticipation was verified on the 16th of March, when the Marquis of Londonderry intimated, in the House of Lords, that he had determined not to accept the appointment.

From this time Sir Robert, despite a gallant

fight, maintained with consummate skill, and with very inadequate aid from his inefficient colleagues, experienced nothing but successive defeats in the House of Commons. Several of the measures which he introduced, indeed, were well received, and in their result were successful: among them was the Bill for regulating the marriages of Dissenters, founded on the principle of treating marriage as a civil contract; this measure was highly approved of and duly appreciated by the Dissenters themselves. Committees were appointed to enquire into the military expenditure of the Colonies and into existing sinecures. The Commission on Education was reappointed; and a Bill for the better maintenance of the discipline of the Church of England was introduced; but these were not questions of vital importance as regarded the Administration, on the contrary, they were of a character in which many Members of the Opposition gave their support to Ministers.

On decidedly party questions, however, defeat followed defeat in quick succession. The question for referring the petition against the alleged interference of the Government Officers, in the Chatham Election, to a committee,

was carried against them by a majority of 161 to 160. Again, on the question for an address to the Crown, to grant a charter to the London University, enabling that Institution to confer degrees in Arts and Law, Ministers again found themselves in a minority.

Of the measures for which Lord John Russell had declared he would wait, there still remained Municipal Reform, and the Irish Church question. On the latter of these, the Opposition resolved to found their grand attack upon the Government, by using their majority, to force upon Sir Robert Peel principles which they knew he never would submit to carry into effect. The point which they knew he was determined not to concede, was, the application of the surplus revenue of the Irish Church, if such revenue should be found to exist, to purposes other than those of the Protestant religion.

Lord John Russell gave notice, that he would, on the 30th of March, bring forward his motion on this subject, and he further moved a call of the House for that day, which was ordered accordingly.

In the mean time, Sir Robert Peel brought forward his own proposition for a Bill to regulate Irish Tithe, and the Irish Church, pru-

dently determining to reduce his opponents to the necessity of proposing a course which they had themselves to this moment opposed. On the 30th of March, pursuant to his notice, Lord John Russell moved the following resolution: "That this House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, in order to consider the present state of the Church Establishment in Ireland, with a view of applying any surplus of the revenues not required for the spiritual care of its members to the general education of all classes of the people, without distinction of religious persuasion."

After a long, protracted debate the House divided upon the question of going into committee on Lord John Russell's resolution, which was carried in the affirmative by 322 to 289—leaving Ministers in a minority of 33.

A renewed debate took place in the committee upon the resolution, which, however, was carried against Ministers by a majority of 25. The numbers being 262 in favor of the resolution, and 237 against it.

Immediately upon this triumph, Lord John Russell gave notice of his intention to move the following resolution:—"That it is the opinion of this House, that no measure upon

the subject of tithes in Ireland, can lead to a satisfactory and final adjustment, which does not embody the principle contained in the foregoing resolution." Another long debate followed the moving this resolution, the result of which was similar to those which preceded it, Ministers again finding themselves in a minority. The numbers being for the resolution 285, against it 258; majority against the Government 27.

The House of Commons having thus unequivocally declared that they intended to insist on certain measures, to which they were to request the concurrence of the Crown, but to which the Ministers could not advise the Crown to give that concurrence, no course remained for the latter to adopt but to resign. Accordingly, on the following day, the 8th of April, Sir Robert Peel, on moving the third reading of the Mutiny Bill, stated that himself and his colleagues, by a unanimous determination, had placed their offices at the disposal of his Majesty, and only held them until their successors should be appointed. On making this announcement Sir Robert observed, " I do not hesitate to say that we have taken this course with the utmost reluctance, and not without the deepest conviction of its necessity. We felt that being in

possession of the entire confidence of the King, and having received from his Majesty the most cordial and unremitting support—looking to the present position of public affairs—to the present state of political parties—looking to the strength, not only the numerical, but the moral strength of that great party by which we have had the honor of being supported, we felt it to be our duty, under existing circumstances, to continue the attempt of administering public affairs, as the responsible advisers of the Crown, to the latest moment that was consistent with the interests of the public service, and with the honor and character of public men. When I do not hesitate to avow the reluctance with which we have tendered our resignations, I believe I shall have credit with a great majority of the House, that that reluctance arose from public considerations alone, and was wholly unconnected with every thing of a personal nature. I have a strong impression that when a public man, at a crisis of great importance, undertakes the public trust of administering the affairs of this country, he incurs an obligation to persevere in the administration of those affairs as long as it is possible for him to do so consistently with his honor. No indifference to

public life, no disgust with the labours which it imposes, no personal mortifications, no deference to private feelings, can sanction a public man in withdrawing, on light grounds, from the post in which the confidence of his Sovereign has placed him. But, at the same time, there is an evil in exhibiting to the country a want, on the part of the Government, of that support in the House of Commons which can enable it satisfactorily to conduct the public affairs—which can enable it to exercise a control over the proceedings of the House—a legitimate and necessary control conferred upon it by the possession of confidence. There is an evil in such an exhibition of weakness to which limits must be placed; and I must say, reviewing all that has occurred since the commencement of the present session—looking to the little progress the Government has been able to make in the public business of the country—looking at what occurred on each of the last four nights—to the fact that Ministers have had the misfortune on each of four successive nights, to be left in a minority—on Thursday last, on Friday last, on Monday last, and last night—considering that that minority was smaller in relation to the majority than the minorities in which they

had been at the commencement of the session — adverting also to the fact that they had received the support of those who, not having a general and unlimited confidence in the Government, yet have given to the Government a cordial and honorable support on every occasion on which it was consistent with their public principles to give it—adverting to all these considerations, I must say, that in my opinion, the time is come when it is incumbent on the Ministers of the Crown to withdraw from the responsibility, which office, under such circumstances, imposes upon them."

The Right Honorable Baronet then proceeded to comment on the vote of the previous evening, adopting the last resolution proposed by Lord John Russell, which he said he conceived implied a want of confidenee on the part of the House, and which was not called for by any public purpose, while it precluded the possibility of himself and his colleagues longer retaining office with honor to themselves or benefit to the country; he concluded as follows:—

" I have been anxious to give this explanation, as briefly as possible, and in a manner the least calculated to give offence, or excite angry

feelings. For myself, the whole of my political life has been spent in the House of Commons—the remainder of it will be spent in the House of Commons; and, whatever may be the conflicts of parties, I, for one, shall always wish, whether in a majority or in a minority, to stand well with the House of Commons. Under no circumstances whatever, under the pressure of no difficulties, under the influence of no temptation, shall I ever advise the Crown to resign that great source of moral strength, which consists in a strict adherence to the practice, to the principles, to the spirit, to the letter, of the Constitution. I am confident that in this adherence, will be found the surest safeguard against any impending or eventual danger, and it is because I entertain that belief, that I, in conformity with the opinion of my colleagues, consider that a Government ought not to persist in carrying on public affairs, after the sense of the House has been fully and deliberately expressed, in opposition to the decided opinion of a majority of the House of Commons. It is because I have that conviction deeply rooted in my mind, that though regretting, as I most deeply do regret, the necessity which has compelled me to abandon his Majesty's service at

the present moment; yet, upon the balance of public considerations, I feel that the course which I have now taken is more likely to sustain the character of public men, and to promote the permanent interests of the country, than if I had longer persevered in what I believe would have proved a fruitless attempt, to conduct, as a Minister, the King's service, in defiance of that opposition which has hitherto obstructed the satisfactory progress of public business."

This communication was made to the House, on the 8th of April; an adjournment took place to the 13th, on which day the House met, and Sir Robert stated, that he had received an intimation from his Majesty, that the new arrangements were in progress, but not completed; and a further adjournment took place to the 16th, and subsequently to the 18th, on which day the list of the new administration was announced. Lord Melbourne resumed his place, as First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. Spring Rice took the appointment of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Aukland was First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord J. Russell, Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, Secretary for Foreign affairs, Mr. C. Grant, Colonial Secretary, Lord Howick, Secretary at War, Lord Lansdowne, President

of the Council, and Lord Holland, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Great Seal was put into commission; the Commissioners were, the Master of the Rolls, the Vice Chancellor, and Mr. Justice Bosanquet. Lord Mulgrave was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Plunkett, Chancellor, and Lord Morpeth, Chief Secretary.

Thus terminated the first administration of Sir Robert Peel. His career, as Prime Minister, had iudeed been a brief one; but so far as his reputation and character, as a Statesman were concerned, it had been altogether triumphant. Few political leaders ever made, in so short a time, so decided a progress in the esteem and estimation of his countrymen. Placed at the head of affairs, under circumstances of peculiar difficulties, inefficiently supported, and, notwithstanding the favorable result of the general election, with a powerful and not over scrupulous opposition, as regarded the means they adopted, to obtain their objects, to contend with, he was compelled so to shape his policy so as not to run counter to altered institutions, and new modes of thinking which had sprung up in the public mind.

He was placed in the difficult situation of a

Minister dependent on popular opinion, yet determined not to succumb to those democratical prejudices which, whilst dignified by the sounding appellation of popular rights, would, frequently, if conceded, lead to the destruction of our most valuable institution, and to the overthrow of all social order. Surrounded by these difficulties Sir Robert Peel performed his task with an ability unexpected even by those who knew him best. He never once shrank from his task; his mind appeared to have received new energy, and his oratorical talents increased powers and brilliancy from the contemplation of the difficulties he had to encounter. He at once took his place in the House, not only as the leader, but without a rival; and even those who were anxious to remove him from the high position in which he stood, could not refrain from paying him the tribute of their admiration at the ability he displayed in maintaining the unequal contest, even to the last hour, in which he had to sustain the position of head of the Government under the Sovereign. He retired from power, although defeated, acknowledged by all as the greatest man whom the contest had called forth, the first statesman, and the ablest political leader in the empire;

and he left behind him a growing conviction on the public mind, that the principles of his Government were those best suited to promote the true interests of the empire , and to ensure the safety of its civil and religious institutions. On his retiring from the administration, he became the leader of the then powerful and daily increasing Conservative party, whose interests he ably supported, and whose influence he so greatly contributed to extend, until, as will be seen in the sequel he was again called forward to supersede Lord Melbourne, and to assume the reins of Government as first Minister of Queen Victoria, and the firm supporter of the just rights and privileges of the people.

The session of 1836 commenced on the 14th of February. The King opened the session in person. Alluding to Ireland in the speech, his Majesty was made to express himself as follows:—" You are already in possession of the report of the commission appointed to enquire into the state of the Municipal Corporations in Ireland; and I entertain the hope that it will be in your power to apply to any defects and evils which may have been shown to exist in these institutions, a remedy founded upon the

same principles as those of the acts which have already passed for England and Scotland."

On the address, in reply to the speech being moved by Sir John Wrottesley and seconded by Mr. Parker, Sir Robert Peel rose to address the House, and, after adverting to the other topics of the Royal speech, to which he said he had no formal objection to offer, he stated his strong repugnance to the paragraph relative to what was called Irish Municipal Reform. If the words of the speech were adopted, the House would be contracting an obligation to apply in Ireland the principle which had been already applied in England and Scotland. He objected to being called on to give any pledge, apart from all considerations of the merits of the question, and therefore moved as an amendment the introduction of the following words into the address:—"We shall proceed, without delay, to the consideration of any defects or evils that may have been shown to exist in these institutions, for the purpose of applying such remedies as may obviate all just causes of complaint, and insure the impartial administration of justice."

This amendment was supported by Lord Stanley, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Shaw. On a

division it was negatived by a majority of 41—the number in favour of the original address being 284, and for the amendment 243.

The Bill was accordingly, in due course, brought in, and read a first time; and the second reading was fixed for February 29th, when Sir Robert Peel took the opportunity of stating the objections of himself and his friends to the principle of the Bill, but did not divide the House. The Bill passed and went to the Lords, where it underwent such amendments and alterations, that, on its being returned to the Commons, the supporters of the Bill abandoned it, and Lord John Russell god rid of the measure, by moving, that the amendments should be taken into consideration that day three months.

The next measure brought in by the Government to which Sir Robert felt it necessary to give his decided opposition, was a Bill for regulating the Irish Tithe System. This Bill contained the appropriation clause. Lord Stanley moved as an amendment the omission of that clause; this amendment was supported by Sir Robert Peel, but was lost on a division, there being for the Bill 300, for Lord Stanley's amendment 261, the majority for the Bill 39.

The Bill in this shape was sent to the Lords, here the appropriation clause was rejected, and the Bill came back to the Commons so altered and amended, from what it had originally been, that the framers of it determined to drop it altogether.

Among the other great measures of the session were the English Commutation of Tithes Bill; the Registration of Deaths and Marriage Bill; the Report of the Commission on the Church of England, and the Bills founded thereon; enquiry into agricultural distress; the Abolition of Imprisonment for Debt Bill. On all these, and others, Sir Robert took a full share in the discussion, and where he could not wholly arrest the progress of the obnoxious measures introduced by the Whig Administration and supported by their Radical allies, he generally succeeded in ameliorating, if not entirely removing, the most objectionable parts of those objectionable measures.—On the 20th of August the session closed.

The commencement of the year 1837 was distinguished by no extraordinary changes in the position of parties in this country, the Conservative Administration had been obliged to give way before the united strength of the

Whig and Radical opposition; and the Whigs with Lord Melbourne at their head were again in power. The experiment which the King was led to make of establishing a Conservative Administration, was, as has been already observed, considered by many as premature. The Whig Ministry, it was said, would, had it been left to itself have fallen to pieces of its own accord; but of the accuracy of this opinion subsequent experience presented ample grounds to doubt the correctness, inasmuch as the Melbourne administration have been seen pertinaciously adhering to their places, after Lord Melbourne's return to office under circumstances of difficulty much more pressing than any by which they had been assailed previous to their retirement in 1834.

With regard to the restored Whig administration; it was made a theme of general accusation against them, that they owed their restoration to power to the support they received from Mr. O'Connell and his followers; that they held office entirely by the grace and favor of the agitator, who could at any time, had they offended him or thwarted his views, have upset his Government. This does not, however, seem to have been the case; for even the appropri-

ation clause, the favourite object with Mr. O'Connell, but which appears to have been insisted upon so perseveringly, rather as a stumbling block to Sir Robert Peel and his Cabinet, than as a tribute to Mr. O'Connell, was, when it had performed its duty by over-turning the Conservative Government, suffered to sink into oblivion. If, therefore, Mr. O'Connell had the power of influencing the Whig Ministers to a certain extent, those Ministers also possessed a control over him sufficiently powerful to check him in his career, whenever they thought proper to do so.

But the circumstance which more than any other operated to embarrass Lord Melbourne's Government, was the feeling entertained towards it by at least two branches of the legislature. The Crown was undisguisedly unfriendly towards it, whilst the overwhelming majority in the House of Lords completely paralized the progress of every important Government measure brought forward. This was certainly a most humiliating situation for an Administration to be placed in; and there did not appear to be any outlet left for it whereby to escape; the majority against it was too large to admit of any attempt being made to overcome it by a

creation of new Peers, even if the King could have been induced to consent to the adoption of such a measure. Party, therefore, was at this time nearly even; true the Whigs had a small majority in the House of Commons, but though they had that trifling majority in numbers, the preponderance of talent and substance was decidedly with the Conservative party—and in the Lords, numbers, talent and property, were all ranged in array against the Government, and under these circumstances, certainly most unfavourable ones, Ministers were preparing to meet Parliament.

To prepare as far as was possible for this important event, the friends and supporters of the Government employed themselves busily in organising meetings, and getting up addresses in different parts of the Kingdom. In the first week in January a meeting took place in Bath, where Mr. Roebuck took the field as the opponent of the late Administration and the champion of the existing one. Sir Wm. Molesworth took the same course with his constituents, and exerted himself strenuously with the Electors of Westminster, in defence of the Administration of Lord Melbourne. But the meeting of the Ministers' friends which presented the most imposing appearance, was that which was held in

at ... where a splendid dinner
... which Mr. Byng, the Father
... House of Commons, presided, and of
... upwards of 1,100 persons partook. The
meeting was addressed by Mr. Byng, Mr. Hume,
Mr. Grote, Mr. Duncombe, Mr. Ward, and
others. Their object was the support of Minis-
ters, but their arguments presented nothing of
novelty. Similar meetings were held in most
parts of the kingdom.

By far the most important meeting, held at this time, however, was one which took place at Glasgow, in the middle of January, in honor of Sir Robert Peel's election to the Lord Rector's Chair in that University. The Right Hon. Baronet had been put in nomination for that high honor in opposition to the Attorney General, Sir John Campbell, and had been elected by a large majority. His visit to Glasgow for the purpose of the Installation, afforded an opportunity for a splendid entertainment being given to him by his political friends and connections resident in that part of the empire. A large temporary saloon was erected for the accommodation of the company, and covers were laid for 3,432 guests, many of whom had been the supporters of the Reform Bill.

Sir Robert, in his address to the assembled

multitude after dinner, alluded to that circumstance as being a matter of great satisfaction.—"I want not," he observed, "to taunt you with reaction or conversion, but, I say, that if you adhere to the principles which you professed in 1830, it is here you ought to come. You consented to a Reform to which you were invited in a speech delivered by your Sovereign, expressly on the condition that it should be according to the acknowledged principles of the Constitution. Let us have no mistake on that point: I see the necessity of widening the foundations on which the defence of our Constitutions, and of our Religious Establishments must rest.

"But," he continued, "let ns come to the main point; for I do not wish to conciliate your confidence or support by hoisting false colours. I mean to support the National Establishments which support Protestantism with the state in the three countries." This declaration was received with the most enthusiastic applause, "I mean to support in its fullest integrity the House of Lords, as an essential and indispensable condition to the maintenance of the Constitution under which we live. Do you also concur in that expression of opinion?" (a decided and

unanimous expression of assent was responded to this interrogatory) "and if you do," observed Sir Robert, "this is a timely declaration of it. The hour has arrived, when if these are our feelings, we must be prepared to act upon them. I have long fought the battles of the Constitution; I have never despaired; I have never doubted that the old, the united hearts of England and Scotland, would rally round the institutions of their common country,—with what a feeling of confidence therefore shall I now return to take my part in the same conflict! The disturbing influence of Foreign example has diminished—the dazzling illusions of the glorious days has passed away; the affections of the people are visibly gravitating again to their old centre; full of a respect for property, a love of rational freedom, and an attachment to long established institutions. From these walls, I trust a spirit will go forth to animate the desponding and encourage the timid. I look abroad from the spot on which I now stand, to the moral influence of that opinion which constitutes the chief defence of nations. I look to it for the maintenance of that system of Government which protects the rich from spoliation and the poor from oppression. I look

to that spirit which will range itself under no tawdry banner of revolution, but will unfurl and rally round that flag which "has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze" yes, I feel no shadow of doubt but that it will continue to float in triumph, and that the constitution, tried as it has been, in the storms of adversity, will come forth purified and fortified in the rooted convictions, the feelings, and the affections, of a religious, a moral, and a patriotic people."

A few days after this declaration of faith and principle, thus publicly delivered by the ex-Premier and present leader of the opposition, namely, on the 31st of January, Parliament met. The session was opened by commission, and the address in reply to the speech, was adopted in both Houses without any serious opposition being offered to it. The principal questions of the sessions, those at least which elicited the greatest opposition, were those which related to Ireland—the Municipal Corporations, the state of Ireland, the defence of Lord Mulgrave's Government, the Irish Tithe question, the system of National Education in Ireland, English Church rates, the Foreign Policy of the Country, Finance, &c., on all these questions Sir Robert Peel, as the leader of the opposition,

took a prominent part, and the repeated divisions which took place upon them gave undoubted and unquestionable proof that the Conservative party in the House was gradually gaining strength, whilst out of doors the popularity of the Whigs was decidedly declining, such was the strength of the opposition which Ministers had to contend with in Parliament, that the month of June arrived, and scarcely one of the important measures recommended for consideration by the King in his speech at the commencement of the session had been disposed of.

Under these circumstances it naturally became a question how long Ministers would be content to retain office and responsibility where they were evidently without the power of control; indeed rumours of their intended resignation had been very general previous to the Easter recess, Lord John Russell having, at the commencement of the session, stated unequivocally that on the adoption or rejection of their Irish measures would depend their tenure of office. There now appeared to be but one remedy for their difficulties, and that was one uncertain in its results, namely a dissolution of Parliament, and to this, it was well known, the King was strongly opposed.

This objection, however was removed much sooner than was expected, by the death of the King, that event taking place at Windsor, on Tuesday, the 20th of June, 1837; and on the 22nd of June, a message from her Majesty was delivered to both Houses. The Queen, in alluding to a dissolution, observed—

"The state of public business, and the period of the session, when considered in connection with the law which imposes upon her Majesty the duty of summoning a new Parliament within a limited time, renders it inexpedient, in the judgment of her Majesty, that any new measures should be recommended for your adoption, with the exception of such as may be requisite for carrying on the public service from the close of the present session to the meeting of a new Parliament."

On the following day Ministers brought the state of the public business under the consideration of the House, and Lord Melborne in the Peers, and Lord John Russell in the Commons pointed out the difficulty of transacting public business in an assembly which was so soon to be dissolved, owing to the almost impossibility of obtaining a due attendance of members. Both noble lords strongly recom-

mended the adoption of that portion of her Majesty's message which recommended a speedy termination of the session and immediate dissolution. The House adopted the suggestion, and the necessary business was disposed of so rapidly that on July the 17th, the prorogation of Parliament by her Majesty in person took place, and on the following day a Proclamation appeared announcing the dissolution.

The new Parliament assembled for the dispatch of business on the 20th of November. The session was opened by the Queen in person. The interval between the return of the writs and the meeting of Parliament, was spent by each party in calculating their gains and their losses in the general election; and it was soon evident that the Ministers had been disappointed in the result, inasmuch as they had gained nothing in quantity, whilst they had lost considerably in quality. In the Commons an amendment was moved to the address, in reply to the speech from the throne, by Mr. Wakely, and seconded by Sir W. Molesworth, the object of which was to assure her Majesty "that the House would in the course of the session take into their consideration the state of the representation of the people with a view to

further amendments and an extension of the Elective Franchise." The amendment was opposed by Sir Robert Peel, who congratulated the House on the aversion which the noble lord —Lord John Russell, had shewn to the Honorable gentleman's physic, and that Ministers had shewn themselves to be made of less squeezable materials than the Honorable gentleman had anticipated. Mr. Wakley insisted on dividing the House, when there appeared for the amendment 20, and for the original address 509.

The discussions of the Civil List, the Duchess of Kent's annuity, the Ministerial Policy, &c., occupied the House until the 23rd of December, on which day the House adjourned to the 16th of January, 1838.

The first measure of importance which occupied the attention of the House of Commons was, the state of affairs in Canada. This subject led to long and warm debates, Lord John Russell having met the House with a declaration of his intention to bring in a Bill, to suspend for a time, the constitution of that branch of our Colonial possessions, and to vest certain extraordinary powers in the hands of the Governor for the time being. His Lordship after

recapitulating the principal events which had occurred in that country, from its first connection with Great Britain, down to the conclusion of the report of the Canadian Commission of 1828; upon which he said he should take his stand, gave an outline of the course of policy which the Government had it in contemplation to adopt and sanction by the Bill which he intended, with leave of the House, to introduce; he observed, that although, in his opinion a time might arrive when he should not be indisposed "to give to the 1,400,000 of our fellow subjects, who were living in the provinces of North America, a participation in the perfect freedom enjoyed by the mother country; he hoped the day of separation was still at a distance." The noble Lord concluded, by moving an "Address to her Majesty, pledging the House to assist her in restoring tranquillity to her Canadian dominions." He at the same time announced, that in the event of the Bill, which he intended to bring in being adopted, the Government had it in contemplation to name Lord Durham as the individual whom they would advise her Majesty to select for the important trust of Governor under the new regulations.

On this occasion Sir Robert Peel censured

the noble lord for the extraordinary course which he had adopted on this occasion; the regular and established mode of proceeding would, he said, have been a communication from the Crown to both Houses of Parliament on the subject. The deviation was as reprehensible as it was unprecedented. Mr. Leader also condemned the course which had been pursued, as an attempt to take gentlemen by surprise, and moved, as an amendment, the adjournment of the House, with a view to affording himself and his friends an opportunity for considering the extraordinary proposition of the noble Lord. This motion was, however, negatived by a majority of 188 to 28, and the Address to the Queen was adopted.

On the following day Lord John Russell introduced his Bill, the discussions upon it, in its different stages, were long and turbulent. Some very important alterations, proposed, in its progress, by Sir Robert Peel, to the leading clauses, were, however, adopted, and the Bill passed by a majority of 110 to 8.

Lord Durham was sent out as Governor of Canada. The results of the noble Lord's Government are matters of History, and do not appertain to this Memoir.

On the 15th of Feb. this year, Mr. Grote brought forward his annual motion for the Vote by Ballot. The motion was supported by the usual arguments. On this occasion, Sir Robert Peel opposed the motion, in a speech of great force: the motion was negatived by a majority of 315 to 198.

On the 6th of March, Sir Wm. Molesworth, disclaiming, as he said, all party views, and still more any personal feelings, but actuated by a desire to bring the whole of our Colonial policy under the consideration of the House, moved an addresss to her Majesty, expressive of the opinion of the House, "that in the present critical state of many of her Majesty's foreign possessions, the Colonial Minister should be a person in whose diligence, activity and firmness the House and the public may be able to place reliance; and declaring that her Majesty's present Secretary of State for the Colonies does not enjoy the confidence of the House or the country."

The notice given by the Honorable Baronet on this subject was considered by Sir R. Peel as one which would afford to the Conservative party an opportunity of making a demonstration of their own strength as a body indepen-

dent of any straggling votes which they might, on almost any other question, chance to obtain.

Previous to the day on which the motion was to be brought on, a grand meeting was held at Sir Robert's residence, when a course of proceeding was determined upon, which had for its object, to shew, that although, at present, it did not meet Sir Robert Peel's views to force himself and friends into office, without the power necessary for conducting the Government, in a manner calculated to benefit the country, yet that the Conservative party was strong enough, even at that time, to control the measures, and even to overturn, should they think proper to do so, the existing administration. In pursuance of this plan, Lord Sandon, after the motion of Sir W. Molesworth had been seconded by Mr. Leader, moved the following amendment; "That an address be presented to Her Majesty, expressing the regret of the House at the treasonable movements in Canada, and their determination to aid her in the suppression of the revolt, and the establishment of a sound Constitution; but representing also their opinion, that the present state of things in that Colony was mainly owing to the want of foresight and energy, and to the ambi-

guous, dilatory, and irresolute course adopted by her Majesty's Ministers."

The debate upon this question was protracted to two nights, and on the second evening of the discussion, Mr. Spring Rice, having complained of the frequent reference which had been made to Ministers, being in a minority, asked, how often the Tories when in power had been beaten on divisions? He stated this to warn young Members against indulging too fondly in hopes raised by two or three divisions against a Government.

Sir Robert Peel rose, and in a good humoured style of superiority, which throughout the session characterized his bearing towards the Ministerial side of the House, observed—"The Right Honorable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had no doubt been looking back, while suffering under the stripes which he had received in the course of the last week, in which the Government had been defeated, in four out of five divisions, and wisely and philosophically had said, 'I will apply myself for consolation to the records of other beatings, and as I do find that other Governments have been defeated, I will be comforted.' But, notwithstanding that tenacity of life, under severe inflictions

for which the present Government was distinguished—a tenacity of which he, Sir Robert, was willing to admit, he when in office, from a sense of duty, exhibited an eminent example, he was afraid that the gentlemen now on the Treasury Bench hardly could survive the blow of a defeat on the present occasion. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, how could they, Sir Robert Peel and his friends, presume to come forward, seeing that they were unable to form a Government? He would tell the Right Honorable gentleman, that being compelled to come to a decision, his first question, seeing that they were forced to give an opinion on the Canadian policy of the Government, was with reference to the course most befitting the honor of the great Conservative party, in vindicating their already expressed opinions on the subject of the misconduct of the Government. The Honorable Baronet brings forwards his motion, expressing a want of confidence in the present Colonial Secretary. "What," asked Sir Robert, "would the Chancellor of the Exchequer have had me do? Would he have had me absent myself from the House altogether? I may be compelled to evade giving a vote, when I cannot conscienti-

ously approve of the decision, whichever way it may turn; but this is what I will never do—stay away from the House when a question is brought on, on which I can pronounce an honest opinion. That course was not open to me. Would the Right Hon. Gentleman have had me move the previous question? Alas! you have so damaged the previous question, that, for some time to come, I fear, it will hardly shew its face again. Why did not Ministers move a counter resolution? The Hon. Baronet gave them so fair an opportunity, that I cannot but wonder that flesh and blood did not prevail with friends so attached to make them bring forward such a resolution.

"I now invite them to do so; and perhaps they will adopt my suggestion, as they did my amendments for the Canada Bill; and this I will promise on the part of my noble friend, Lord Sandon, that if the noble Lord opposite will abandon the course which he said he should adopt, and move a resolution flattering to his noble friend the Secretary of the Colonies, we will wave our resolution, and fight the battle on that ground; if you will not, what are we to do? Sir William Molesworth's motion says 'that it is essential that the Colonial Minister

should be a person in whose diligence, forethought, judgment, activity, and firmness this House and the public may be able to place reliance.' You are going to negative that. I am not surprised at it. The suggestion of qualities is sometimes the most unfortunate thing in the world for one's friends; but then the motion goes on to say 'that her Majesty's present Secretary of State for the Colonies, does not enjoy the confidence of the House or the country.' Now I think that the noble Lord ought to move to leave out these latter words and insert the following in their place:—'And seeing that the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department does unite in himself those various qualities of diligence, forethought, judgment, activity and firmness; he does enjoy the confidence of the House and of the country; and this House is of opinion, that the affairs of the Colonies ought to continue to be administered by the noble Lord." That is the amendment which I suggest to the noble Lord opposite for his consideration. That being done we will withdraw our own resolution, and contest the resolution of the noble Lord."

After some observations in reply from Lord John Russell, Sir Wm. Molesworth withdrew

his resolution, and the amendment proposed by Lord Sandon was put as the original motion. On a division the numbers were, for Lord Sandon's resolution 287, against it 316, giving a majority for Ministers of 29.

The Irish Poor Law Bill and the Bill for the regulation of the Irish Municipal Corporations formed, as heretofore, a ground of strong contention between the Government and the opposition; and, on the 27th of March, Sir Robert Peel, in reply to a question put to him by Lord John Russell, said " He entertained a strong wish and desire to see some arrangement adopted, both as regarded the Irish Corporations and the Irish Church; but he felt himself bound to declare what indeed he had always declared on this subject, that security for the Irish Church must be an essential condition in coming to any such arrangement Without that preliminary no negociation could be entered upon between himself and the Noble Lord on the subject, which had for its object the removal of his (Sir Robert's) opposition to the measures proposed by the Noble Lord, as regarded those questions.

In adverting to the transactions of the year 1838, it is imperative we should notice the

grand entertainment given by the Conservatives to their leader, at Merchant Taylor's Hall, on the 12th of May, at which the Marquis of Chandos presided. On this occasion three hundred Conservative members of the House of Commons were present, "a body of gentlemen," to use the words of the Noble Chairman, "perhaps, the most influential in the country, and who, being united heart and hand in support of his Right Honorable Friend, and anxious to evince their sense of his public conduct, had invited him as their guest, that he might receive publicly, at their hands, their full, unanimous, and enthusiastic approbation of his conduct in Parliament and elsewhere."

On his health being proposed Sir Robert took an opportunity of explaining the line of policy by which he had been guided in his opposition to the Government, "My object," he observed, "for some years past has been to lay the foundation of a powerful party, which existing in the House of Commons, and deriving its strength from the popular will, should diminish the risk, and deaden the shock of collisions between the two deliberative branches of the Legislature. That object has, I may say, been obtained, as is proved by the assembly which I

have now the honor of addressing. In the session immediately following the passing of the Reform Bill, we never mustered on any division in the House of Commons more than 100 Conservatives; now, I have the honor of addressing upwards of 300. Thus has this powerful party been brought into existence, and, as the meeting of this day shews, matured; it has been submitted twice to the test of public opinion. Twice has a dissolution taken place under circumstances calculated to determine whether this party has, or has not, the public confidence. One trial took place when it was in power, the other when power was in the hands of its opponents. On the first dissolution in 1835, when I was at the head of the Government, the Conservative numbers were suddenly swollen from about 150 to double that number; I believe we divided on the nomination of Speaker 306 members. But it was then said, 'you owe success to the possession of power, wait till another dissolution takes place, wait till your opponents exercise those functions of Government which you discharged when Parliament was assembled in 1835; and be prepared for a reduction in your numbers, more rapid and striking than their increase has been.' Well,

to that second test we have at length been submitted; the dissolution took place in the course of last year with every circumstance calculated to be favorable to those in power. There was the accession of a youthful and beloved Queen; there was one universal feeling of personal loyalty and attachment towards the Sovereign assending the throne, with every thing to prepossess in her favor. There was a lavish use of her Majesty's name, for the purpose of influencing the elections—there was a curious coincidence—a fortunate—a fortuitous one for the Government, of dispatches, approving the conduct of public officers, printed and circulated on the eve of a general election. There was no fastidious delicacy in the choice of candidates; for the hustings of Westminster exhibited a Secretary of State voting in favor of one who had defended insurrection in Canada, and warmly advocated the cause of the Canadian revolt; and yet notwithstanding this combination of favorable circumstances, the accession of her Majesty, the prodigal use of her name, the absence of all squeamish scruples in the selection of candidates, still the result of the general election presented our numbers unbroken; for as we voted 306 having had all the

advantages of dissolution during the tenure of Government, the names attached to the invitation of this day comprizing 313 members of the House of Commons, will I think sufficiently demonstrate that, notwithstanding the adverse predictions to the contrary, the public confidence has not permitted our numbers to be reduced in consequence of the second dissolution.

"The possession of strength, the demonstration of power naturally brings with it some slight inconvenience. There is impatience in some quarters, that seeing the strength we possess, it is not called into more frequent action; but we must bear in mind that the particular course which an opposition should take, must partly depend upon the principles they maintain. Our more impatient friends in the country must recollect that our very name is a contradiction, we are a Conservative opposition; adopt the principles which used to be said to prevail in an Administration. We not only adopt the principles of a Government, but we perform many of its functions, and it must be borne in mind that we cannot, in conformity with our opinions, take that latitude of action which might befit an opposition acting on precisely contrary prin-

ciples—an opposition which professed to think the ancient institutions of this country a grievance, which considered English society a mass of abuse, has a double ground of opposition against a Government. It has first the ground of personal dissatisfaction with the course taken by Government, censuring and disapproving of the acts of Government, together with no indisposition to inflame popular discontent against the institutions of the country. But we must bear in mind that our duty, prescribed to us by our principles, is to maintain the ancient institutions of the land. We have no desire to exalt the authority of the House of Commons above the Prerogative of the Crown; we have no desire to undermine the privileges of the House of Lords, on the contrary it is our duty to defend them. The field of opposition occupied by those who seek to reduce and cripple our establishments is denied to us, because we wish to see the Naval and Military Establishments of the country maintained in proper vigour and efficiency. It is not for us to inflame popular discontent by the exaggeration of public abuses; nor can we lend the Crown our arm to shake or curtail the liberties of the people, and therefore in estimating the course we

have adopted, those who feel some impatience with our apparent indifference and passiveness, should always recollect that the principles maintained by an opposition, do impose some practical restraint on the conduct they must pursue.

"I said that we maintain the principles and perform some of the functions of Government, and I will prove this to be the case. I will select three main questions from many, on which divisions have taken place and on which her Majesty's Government, without the aid of the Conservative party, must have had to lament the smallness of their numbers as put in competition with their Radical allies—I will take the three questions to which I allude, one connected with the religious establishments of the country, another connected with an important branch of the domestic industry and internal commerce, and the third connected with the foundations of Civil Government, and the maintenance of the Constitution of the House of Commons. The first question to which I refer merely as a specimen, for there are hundreds of others, is the motion made in the year 1837 for excluding the Bishops from the House of Lords, "for relieving them," I believe it was called, "from the performance of their legislative

duties in Parliament." That motion was manfully resisted, as far as speeches went, by her Majesty's Ministers; it was resisted also by ourselves; but coming to a division the ayes in favour of excluding the Bishops were 92, the noes 197. The adherents of the Government mustered only 50, whilst the Conservatives numbered 147; that is the first proof I give that I am not overrating our strength and influence when I say that we do execute some of the important functions of Government. The second question involved the repeal of the Corn Laws; on that occasion, in 1838, the ayes were 95, the noes 300, but 226 of the 300 were Conservatives; the Whigs only mustering 74, being in fact in a minority of 21. The last question to which I will refer, also in the present session, is the vote by Ballot. Don't let it be said that I am overrating the importance of that question. The vote by Ballot was declared by the Minister of the Crown in the House of Commons to be not only important in itself, but as involving mighty changes in the representative constitution of this country. It was resisted on that ground, there voted for the Ballot 198, against it 315—254 being Conservatives, and only 61 composed of those, who acknowledging

the Minister as their leader, supported him in the objections he had taken to the adoption of that measure.

" I ask those friends who are impatient for more decisive action, to remember the steps by which our power has been daily advancing. I call upon them to remember that it has been by moderation, by prudence, by an undeviating adherence to our principles, that we have attained our present position. This, I advise, that on every occasion, be the consequence what it may, we should resist the acts of the Government when we believe them to be injurious, and avoid no fitting opportunity of enforcing the principles we maintain; that, for the purpose of averting any change in the Government, we should, on no account, abate, in the slightest degree, one of those principles which we consider essential to the security of our institutions in Church and State; but I do hope we shall never be betrayed, for the sake of any temporary advantage, into a union with those from whose principles we wholly disagree. I also hope that we shall never adopt the advice which we sometimes receive from ardent friends and professed admirers, namely, to abandon altogether our duty in the House of Commons,

for the purpose of creating embarrassment by leaving the Government to fight it out by themselves. My firm belief is, that, by steadily performing our legislative functions, by attending to our duty, by censuring Ministers, or attempting to censure them, when censure may be required, on all occasions, by enforcing our principles, by amending their measures where they require amendment, though, at the same

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ship further stated that, " should the House, on that occasion, disapprove of the policy, adopted by them in regard to Ireland, no course would be left for himself and his colleagues, but to relinquish to other hands the Government of the country." This announcement was received with vociferous cheering by all parts of the House.

In pursuance of this notice, Lord John Russell, on the 15th of April, the Easter recess having intervened, brought the subject before the House, in the shape of a resolution, intimating an approval of the policy pursued towards Ireland generally, by the existing Government. This motion Sir Robert Peel opposed, and moved an amendment, giving but a partial approval to Ministers, and reserving to the House the right of opposing such other measures of the Government, as they might consider deserving opposition. After a debate which occupied several evenings, the House came to a division, when the amendment was negatived by a majority of 22. The numbers being for Lord John Russell's motion 318; for Sir Robert Peel's amendment 296.

A majority so small, in a House so fully attended, and upon a question of such vital im-

portance to Government, was in fact a defeat. But the time was not yet fully ripe for the resumption of Government by the Conservatives. The Melbourne Cabinet therefore continued to linger on at the mercyof its opponents. The grand trial of strength was, however, approaching on another question, and one of seemingly very subordinate importance; but which was doomed to give rise to circumstances that for a few days, formed a subject of intense interest with the public. The motion related to the Island of Jamaica; the conduct of the Local Legislature of that island had been such as to induce the Colonial Secretary to introduce a Bill, the object of which was to give to the Government at home, certain extraordinary powers which would for a time have operated to suspend the authority of the Local Legislature. This Bill was strongly opposed by the Conservatives as an unnecessary and harsh invasion of the constitutional rights of the Colony; and on Lord John Russell, on the 3rd of May, moving the committee on the Bill —Sir Robert Peel as an amendment moved that "the Bill be committed that day six months," upon this amendment a debate took place, which was adjourned, and after two

evenings, discussion, on a division taking place there appeared for the committal of the Bill 294, for Sir Robert Peel's amendment 289, leaving Ministers with a diminished majority of only 5. The division took place on the 6th of May, and on Tuesday the 7th, Lord Melbourne in the Lords, and Lord John Russell in the Commons, announced that Ministers had, in consequence of the defeat of the Bill, tendered their resignations to her Majesty, who had signified her royal pleasure to accept them.

Upon tendering his resignation to her Majesty, Lord Melbourne recommended that the Duke of Wellington should be honored with her Majesty's commands to form a new Cabinet. The Queen, in compliance with this advice, sent for his Grace, who immediately waited on her Majesty; and, at his suggestion, Sir Robert Peel was summoned to Buckingham Palace, and at two o'clock on Wednesday the 8th of May, he received the royal commands to proceed immediately to form a new Administration, of which he was himself to be the head.

On the following day, Sir Robert again had an audience of her Majesty, on which occasion he submitted the following list of persons, as those whom he should select to fill the principal

offices of State—The Duke of Wellington, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Stanley, Sir J. Graham, Sir H. Hardinge and Mr. Goulburn. Her Majesty approved of this list, at the same time signifying her wish that Lord Liverpool should hold an appointment in her household, to which Sir Robert expressed an immediate assent.

Thus terminated Sir Robert's interview with Her Majesty, on Thursday the 9th of May; and it is somewhat extraordinary that, on the evening of that day, the old Cabinet reassembled; and at this meeting there is little doubt that they determined on consenting to return to office, as the next morning, Sir Robert was honored with the following note from Her Majesty.

"Buckingham Palace, May 10th, 1839.

"The Queen having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir Robert Peel, to *remove the Ladies of her Bedchamber*, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is *repugnant to her feelings.*"

Within two or three hours the right hon. baronet forwarded to the Queen a representation of which this is a copy:—

"Whitehall, May 10, 1839.

"Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty

to your majesty, and has had the honour of receiving your Majesty's note of this morning. In respectfully submitting to your Majesty's pleasure and humbly returning into your Majesty's hands the important trust which your Majesty had been graciously pleased to commit to him, Sir Robert Peel trusts that your Majesty will permit him to state to your Majesty his impression with respect to the circumstances which have led to the termination of his attempt to form an administration for the conduct of your Majesty's service. In the interview with which your Majesty honored Sir Robert Peel yesterday morning, after he had submitted to your Majesty the names of those whom he proposed to recommend to your Majesty for the principal executive appointments, he mentioned to your Majesty his earnest wish to be enabled, with your Majesty's sanction, so to constitute your Majesty's household that your Majesty's confidential servants might have the advantage of a public demonstration of your Majesty's full support and confidence, and that at the same time, as far as possible, consistently with that demonstration, each individual appointment in the household should be entirely acceptable to your Majesty's personal feelings. On your Majesty's

expressing a desire that the Earl of Liverpool should hold an office in the household, Sir Robert Peel requested your Majesty's permission, at once, to offer to Lord Liverpool the office of Lord Steward, or any other which he might prefer. Sir Robert Peel then observed, that he should have every wish to apply a similar principle to the chief appointments which are filled by the ladies of your Majesty's household, upon which your Majesty was pleased to remark that you must reserve the whole of those appointments, and that it was your Majesty's pleasure that the whole should continue, as at present, without any change. The Duke of Wellington, in the interview to which your Majesty subsequently admitted him, understood also that this was your Majesty's determination, and concurred with Sir Robert Peel in opinion that, considering the great difficulties of the present crisis, and the expediency of making every effort, in the first instance, to conduct the public business of the country, with the aid of the present parliament, it was essential to the success of the commission with which your Majesty had honoured Sir Robert Peel, that he should have that public proof of your Majesty's entire support and confidence which would be afforded by the per-

mission to make some changes in that part of your Majesty's household which your Majesty resolved on maintaining entirely without change. Having had the opportunity, through your Majesty's gracious consideration, of reflecting upon this point, he humbly submits to your Majesty that he is reluctantly compelled, by a sense of public duty, and of the interests of your Majesty's service, to adhere to the opinion which he ventured to express to your Majesty. He trusts he may be permitted, at the same time, to express to your Majesty his grateful acknowledgments for the distinction which your Majesty conferred upon him, by requiring his advice and assistance in the attempt to form an administration, and his earnest prayer that whatever arrangements your Majesty may be enabled to make for that purpose may be most conducive to your Majesty's personal comfort and happiness, and to the promotion of the public welfare."

Such was the conclusion of this extraordinary negociation. In the course of the Parliamentary explanations which followed, Sir Robert Peel, repeating his resolution not to report the conversations that had taken place, said, he felt himself, nevertheless, at full liberty to state his own impressions on the subject of the royal

household, and the progress he had made in the constitution of it. His impressions were simply that to retain in the household the close relatives of the political opponents of the new Government would be, in express terms, to proclaim to the world that the confidence of her Majesty in the Conservative Administration was neither complete or sincere.

On the 7th of May the Melbourne Cabinet resigned. The 11th of May saw it again restored to full power, Lord Melbourne as its head, and Lord John Russell again to lead the Ministerial side of the House of Commons. The session was protracted to the 27th of August, but the progress of the public business was such as to show that whatever energy Ministers individually might possess, collectively, as a Government, they were destitute of power to render those energies available for the benefit of the country.

The recess between the prorogation in August, 1839, and the meeting of Parliament, in January, 1840, produced some important events calculated to divert, in some degree, the attention of the people from the progress of public business generally. The most important of these was the rumour now spread abroad of

her Majesty's approaching marriage: rumour soon became certainty; and the announcement, which soon got abroad, in a demi-official form, through the columns of those public journals which were known to be in the confidence of the Government, of the name of the fortunate object of her Majesty's choice, appeared to give general satisfaction. It was stated confidently that the marriage would take place soon after the meeting of Parliament; and it was anticipated by the friends of the existing Administration that the auspicious event, in which the Minister of the day might be supposed to have so largely participated in bringing about, would contribute greatly to strengthen the hands of his Government.

The meeting of Parliament was, therefore, looked forward to with more than usual anxiety. The session commenced on the 16th of January, and was opened by the Queen in person with a speech from the throne, in which her Majesty adverted to her approaching marriage with Prince Albert in the following terms:—

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"Since you have last assembled, I have declared my intention of allying myself in marriage with the Prince of Saxe Cobourg

and Gotha. I humbly implore that the Divine blessing may prosper this union, and render it conducive to the interests of my people, as well as my own domestic happiness; and it will be to me a source of the most lively satisfaction to find the resolution I have taken approved of by my Parliament. The constant proofs I have received of your attachment to my person and family persuade me that you will enable me to provide for such an establishment as may appear suitable to the rank of the Prince, and the dignity of the Crown."

This allusion to the Royal marriage, as a matter of course, demanded the immediate notice of Parliament, especially that portion of it which referred to making provision for the establishment of the favoured object of her Majesty's choice. Accordingly, Lord John Russell, on the 24th of January, called the attention of the House of Commons to the subject, by moving the order of the day for taking that portion of her Majesty's speech into consideration. In addressing the House his Lordship went into a detail of precedents relative to the allowance made to various branches of the Royal Family, commencing with Queen Anne, and particularly to that of

Prince George of Denmark, the consort of that sovereign, and submitted, that forming an opinion on all the cases which had occurred from that time to the present, it would appear that £50,000 a-year was the sum which had been allotted to princes placed in the situation in which Prince Albert was about to be placed, and to the Queen's consort in this Kingdom. He should, therefore, move " that her Majesty be enabled to grant an annual sum, not exceeding £50,000, out of the consolidated fund, for a provision to Prince Albert, to commence on the day of his marriage with her Majesty, and to continue during his life." On this proposition the debate was adjourned to the 28th of January, when the subject being again brought forward, Mr. Hume, in accordance with a notice previously given, moved, as an amendment, to substitute £21,000 for £50,000.

Upon Mr. Hume's proposition, Colonel Sibthorp proposed to graft another, and to make the grant £30,0000. To make way for this proposition, the House divided upon Mr. Hume's motion, which was negatived by 267 to 38. Colonel Sibthorp then proposed his amendment to make the grant £30,000.

This was, in fact, the proposition of the

Conservative party, and as such it was received by the House. Lord J. Russell, in supporting the original motion, alluding to what had fallen from Lord Elliott, who had supported the amendment observed, "I certainly am bound to give credit to the noble lord, who, at the same time he supports the reduction, makes great professions of respect for her Majesty's domestic comfort; and I only wish that such language had not been confined to him or to the speeches of this night. The noble lord, when supporting the reduction, said, "he was doing so with every respect for her Majesty;" but when professions of extraordinary respect are made, I cannot forget that no sovereign of this country ever has been insulted in such a manner as her present Majesty has been. Had it not been for the events of May last, this vote would not have been opposed."

With the exception of Sir Robert Inglis, who at an early period of the debate intimated his intention of supporting the Ministers, all the Conservative members who addressed the House spoke in favour of Colonel Sibthorp's amendment. At a late period of the debate, Sir Robert Peel rose to address the House. He observed—"he did not know that he should

have risen, had it not been for the insinuation thrown out by the noble lord, an insinuation so improperly, so unjustly applied, so contrary to all Parliamentary record, so unworthy, as he (Sir R. Peel) thought, of the situation which the noble Lord held as a Minister of the Crown and leader of the House of Commons. The noble Lord had said, that had it not been for the events of May last the vote would not have been opposed. What right had he to say so? Suppose he (Sir R. Peel) had said that this grant proposed by the noble Lord was influenced by considerations, would he not be immediately told by the Chair that he should not impute motives? But, on the other hand, he would say that it would be as unworthy and as uncandid if he shrunk from the performance of his duty. He would repeat that it would be a false delicacy if he shrunk from giving a vote which he thought to be right, because he might be told that he so gave it on account of the events of May last. He did not take the present course on the ground that such votes were often denied. It was not on the ground of the numbers of families the amount might support, or upon any nice calculations of such a nature. He believed that this country was powerful and

able enough to grant whatever might be thought fitting for the establishment of the Prince-consort; but this he knew, that although he might incur temporary displeasure, he felt that in taking the course he was now doing, he was best consulting the safety of the Crown, by giving that sum which would support the dignity of the Crown, and which was proportioned to the ability of the people. He was the best friend of the Crown if he opposed that extravagance which might not meet the views of the people. There was something in the present state of the public mind which would infallibly injure both parties in the House, if the contest between them was of so unworthy a character as to which should grant most to the Crown. He (Sir R. Peel) would not be provoked by anything which had fallen from the noble Lord, and he could assure the House that his gallant friend (Colonel Sibthorp) had made the motion without the slightest consultation with him (Sir R. Peel). He did not at present exactly know what the intention of the gallant Colonel was. He (Sir R. Peel) thought that £30,000 a-year during the life of her Majesty would be a just and liberal allowance. In the event of the Prince surviving her Majesty, and there being no

children, he thought the continuation of that sum would be a fair allowance: but in case he should survive and there be children, he thought that £50,000 would be a proper sum to give. In the event of Prince Albert having a numerous family, he (Sir R. Peel) for one, would vote for any proposition that might be found to be fitting and necessary for the honor and dignity of the Crown. He grounded his vote on a consideration of the reasons of the case. Was not this £30,000 now payable for the life of the Queen and Prince Albert equivalent to £100,000 payable in the event of survivorship? On the ordinary principles of computation an annuity of £30,000 now payable was equivalent not to £100,000 but to £200,000 dependent on the contingency of survivorship. Let them again take the case of Prince Leopold and Princess Charlotte. They had granted to them only £60,000 and that was to maintain their whole household. This was in reality giving Prince Leopold only £30,000 as the Princess Charlotte had 30,000 a-year before the marriage. They had then only £60,000 a-year during the life of both, and Leopold was to have £50,000 in the case of his surviving the Princess. But could any man deny that that

grant was generally considered, even in those days, too great?

"Let them next take the case of the other members of the royal family. There was only £21,000 given to each of those members to support the whole of their establishments. Should they not then consider £30,000 to Prince Albert a liberal allowance? True, the amount of the privy purse was £60,000 for King William, and £50,000 for Queen Adelaide —but out of these sums they were obliged to meet many demands to which Prince Albert would not be liable. Prince Albert, for instance, would find an establishment already prepared for him, and would be thus saved from expenses to which William and Adelaide had been subjected.

"Whatever might be the result of this comparison, he would say that £30,000 to Prince Albert would give the same amount for the exclusive uses of the privy purse to him (Prince Albert) as the £50,000 which had been allowed to Queen Adelaide. But it must be always considered that provisions for the establishment of Queen's Consort must be different from those for the establishment of King's Consort. There is a great establishment necessary in the one case which there is not in the other. In the

case of Queen's Consort, there is a necessity for a new establishment altogether. But how could the noble lord say that Prince Albert would be under the necessity of establishing a new stable department? He could not possibly be under any such necessity. This had been already proved. But a Queen Consort would be under the necessity of finding horses and carriages for her female attendants.

"On these grounds," observed Sir Robert, "I have come to the conclusion that £30,000 is a fair and liberal allowance—and having come to this conclusion, I am resolved, notwithstanding those unjust imputations, and disregarding all other considerations, not to enter the unseemly conflict of vying with each other in unjust liberality to the Crown, I will give to the Crown what I deem liberal and just—and I deem it my duty to the Crown and to my constituents not to make grants to the Crown which would be extravagant, unnecessary, and unjust. I make no declarations of loyalty. I have no compunctions of conscience on that ground. I never made concurrence in political sentiments on the part of the sovereign a condition of my allegiance. I never have been otherwise than loyal and respectful towards the Crown and every member of the royal family. Not a

thought of disloyalty or disrespect to the sovereign, or any member of the royal family, however adverse their political sentiments may have been, has ever entered my mind. When I am thus prepared to do my duty to this House, to the Crown, and to my constituents, I should think it unworthy of my station in this House, and my position before the country, if I thought that I could not take that straightforward course without needless declarations of loyalty against insinuations which I know to be untrue and unfounded."

At the conclusion of Sir Robert Peel's speech the House divided, when there appeared—for Lord John Russell's motion of £50,000. 158; for Col. Sibthorp's amendment of £30,000, 262; majority against the Whig Government, 104.

This triumphant majority over the Government, and that, too, upon a question on which the Sovereign no doubt took a warm interest, would in former times, and before the passing the Reform Bill, have been considered so signal a defeat that resignation of office would have immediately followed, and it may at first appear difficult to account for the tenacity of place by which the Ministers were on this occasion induced to retain their situations in the

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This triumphant majority over the Government, and that, too, upon a question on which the Sovereign no doubt took a warm interest, would in former times, and before the passing the Reform Bill, have been considered so signal a defeat that resignation of office would have immediately followed, and it may at first appear difficult to account for the tenacity of place by which the Ministers were on this occasion induced to retain their situations in the

the House and said, "he withheld his confidence from the noble Lord, J. Russell, and his colleagues, on every ground on which confidence could be withheld; on the results of their public policy, on their own confessions of incompetence, on the testimony of their most valued friends, on account of the constitution of their Government, on account of their measures, and above all of the principles they were now forced to avow, in order that they might retain their majority, and with that majority their offices." Sir Robert entered into a review of the whole course of Ministerial policy which had been pursued by the Government, and concluded his speech as follows:—"I cannot answer the question which has been put to me, what principles will prevail if a new Government is formed? but I can answer for it, that if the principles I profess do not prevail, of that Government I shall form no part. It may be that by the avowal of my opinions, I shall forfeit the confidence of some who, under mistaken impressions, may have been hitherto disposed to follow me. I shall deeply regret the withdrawal of that confidence; but I would infinitely prefer to incur the penalty of its withdrawal than to retain it under false pretences, or under mistaken ap-

prehensions which silence on my part might confirm. And in that case I shall not seek to compensate the threatened loss of confidence on this side of the House, by the faintest effort to conciliate the support of the other; but I shall steadily persevere in the course which I have uniformly pursued since the passing of the Reform Bill, content with the substantial power which I shall still exercise, indifferent as to office, as far as personal feelings or personal objects are concerned, ready if required, to undertake it, whatever be its difficulties, refusing to accept it on conditions inconsistent with personal honor, disdaining to hold it by the tenure by which it is at present held.

"Every stimulus to continued exertion will remain, every distinction which my ambition aspires to will be gained. I shall have the co-operation of many friends, whom I honor and esteem, and with whom I have acted since my first entrance into the troubled career of political life; and above all other encouragements, above all other distinctions, I shall have the proud satisfaction of acting in entire and cordial concert with that illustrious man on whose right hand I have stood throughout the varying fortunes of the great contests of recent years,

accordingly moved the second reading, when the Bill was opposed by Sir Robert Peel who divided the House upon it. The second reading was carried by a majority of 299 to 294.

This close division, although it appears to have startled, did not deter the Ministers, since Lord Morpeth, on the 26th of April, moved that the Bill should be committed. When in the committee, Lord Howick moved as an amendment to the qualification "that a tenant claiming the right of voting, should be rated to the poor rate £5 over the rent of the holding out of which he claimed." He did not propose this amendment he said, out of hostility to his noble friend, but he thought by adopting it, the right of voting would be preserved to a valuable class of persons, from whom it would be taken by a rating of £8. The amendment was opposed by Lord Morpeth and Lord John Russell, and supported by Sir Robert Peel, and on a division, the amendment was carried against Ministers by a majority of 291 to 270. On the numbers being declared, Sir Robert enquired what course Lord Morpeth intended to take on the Bill; to which Lord Morpeth replied that he should propose to postpone the further consideration of the Bill until the fol-

lowing Thursday, to give time for consideration; this course was accordingly adopted, and on that day the House again went into a committee, and the debate on the second clause was resumed; and ultimately, on a division, the clause was lost, the Ministers being again in a minority of 289 to 300 against the clause. Upon this Lord John Russell moved "that the chairman do report progress," but as the noble Lord omitted to add, "and do ask leave to sit again," the Bill was lost.

On the 7th of May Lord John Russell moved in the Committee of Ways and Means, a resolution for the reduction of the duties on foreign sugar; to which Lord Sandon moved as an amendment expressing an opinion "that the House was not, under existing circumstances, and considering the sacrifices which the country had already made to put an end to the Slave Trade, in a situation to adopt the course now proposed by her Majesty's Government, relative to the duties on foreign sugars." The debate upon this question was continued nightly by adjournment till the 18th, on which night a division took place, when there appeared for the original motion of Lord John Russell 281. For Lord Sandon's amendment 317; leaving Ministers again in a minority of 36.

gave rise to a debate which extended over four nights, and in the course of which Sir Robert Peel explained, at considerable length, his views as regarded the Corn laws and other great questions pending for the judgment of the House. At the expiration of the fourth night's debate a division took place, when the numbers appeared, for the original address 269, for the amendment 360—Majority in favour of the opposition 91. A similar amendment was proposed by Lord Ripon in the House of Lords, and adopted by a majority of 72, the numbers being for the address 96, for the amendment 168.

An expression of opinion on the part of the new Parliament so unequivocal was at once decisive of the fate of Lord Melbourne's Cabinet; no course remained for the noble Viscount but resignation. Accordingly, on the following Monday, Lord Melbourne in the Lords, and Lord J. Russell in the Commons, announced that Ministers, in consequence of the votes of the two Houses on the address, had tendered their resignations, which her Majesty had been graciously pleased to accept, and that they now only held office until their successors should be appointed. Immediately after receiving this

announcement both Houses adjourned for a week to afford an opportunity for perfecting the new arrangements. The following is the account given of Sir Robert Peel's interview with the Queen on this occasion:—

On Sunday evening, while Sir Robert Peel was dining with Earl de Grey, in St. James's Square, a messenger arrived from the Queen, commanding the attendance of Sir Robert Peel at Windsor, on the following day.

Sir Robert Peel left his residence in Whitehall Gardens at half-past twelve o'clock on Monday, for Windsor Castle. Before leaving town he visited the Duke of Wellington at Apsley House, and had a long interview with the Duke. Sir Robert arrived at Windsor Castle in an open carriage shortly before four o'clock, and had an audience of her Majesty. On Sir Robert's arrival at the Castle, it appears, from instructions previously given, at her Majesty's command, the Right Honorable Baronet's carriage was ordered through the grand entrance to the principal court. Immediately after Sir Robert had alighted from his carriage he was conducted to the Royal presence. The Right Honorable Baronet remained at the Castle until five o'clock, and then took his departure for town, arriving

at Whitehall Gardens at seven o'clock. In the course of the evening there was a meeting of the heads of the Conservative party, at the residence of Sir Robert Peel.

On Wednesday Sir Robert Peel arrived at Windsor, for the purpose of laying before her Majesty, for her approval, the names of those statesmen in conjunction with whom he proposed to carry on the Government of the country. Sir Robert left town in his barouche, by the eleven o'clock train, and accompanied by his second son. He went by railway as far as Slough, and thence with post horses to Windsor Castle, which he reached shortly before twelve o'clock. Sir Robert did not leave the Castle until twenty minutes to two o'clock.

The following is the list of Ministers submitted to the Queen by Sir Robert Peel, and approved of by her Majesty:—

THE CABINET.

The Duke of Wellington	Leader of the House of Lords, without office.
Lord Lyndhurst . . .	Lord Chancellor.
Lord Wharncliffe . .	President of the Council.
Duke of Buckingham .	Lord Privy Seal.
Sir Robert Peel . . .	First Lord of the Treasury.
The Earl of Haddington	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Sir James Graham . .	Sec. of State for the Home Department.
The Earl of Aberdeen .	Sec. of State for Foreign Affairs.

Lord Stanley	Sec. of State for the Col. Department.
The Earl of Ripon . .	President of the Board of Trade.
Lord Ellenborough . .	President of the Board of Control.
Mr. Goulburn . . .	Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Sir. H. Hardinge . . .	Secretary at War.
Sir Edward Knatchbull	Treasurer of the Navy and Paymaster of the Forces.

NOT IN THE CABINET.

Lord Granville Somerset	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Sir George Murray . .	Master-General of the Ordnance.
Lord Lowther	Postmaster-General.
Lord Lincoln . . , .	First Com. of Land Revenue.
Viscount Canning . .	Under Foreign Secretary.
G. W. Hope, Esq. . .	Under Colonial Secretary.
Hon. C. M. Sutton . .	Under Home Secretary.
Hon. W. Baring and J. Emerson Tennent	Secretaries of the Board of Control.
Sir G. Cockburn and the Hon. Henry Corry	Lords of the Admiralty.
Hon. Sidney Herbert .	Secretary of the Admiralty.
Sir Thomas Freemantle and Sir George Clerk	Secretaries of the Treasury.
W. E. Gladstone, Esq. .	Vice President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint.
Marquis of Exeter . .	Lord Chamberlain.
Lord E. Bruce . . .	Vice Chamberlain.
Earl of Jersey . . .	Master of the Horse.
Earl of Liverpool . .	Lord Steward.
Sir F. Pollock . . .	Attorney General.
Sir William Follett . .	Solicitor General.
Earl de Grey	Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.
Lord Eliot	Secretary for Ireland.
Sir Edward Sugden .	Chancellor for Ireland.
Mr. Blackburne . . .	Attorney-General for Ireland.
Mr. Pennefather . . .	Solicitor-General for Ireland.

racter for the purpose of equalizing the revenue and expenditure of the country, during the present session of Parliament. He had himself already expressed an opinion that the time had arrived when it was absolutely necessary to provide some effectual means for equalizing the revenue and expenditure of the country, but he hoped the House would give him its confidence and allow time to her Majesty's Government to give the subject their serious attention. Though he and his colleagues had now been in office for some days, he was not yet prepared to pronounce a positive opinion on affairs of such immense importance; and he trusted that the House would go with him in thinking it advisable that time should be given to the new Government to weigh maturely the measures they might think fit to submit to Parliament connected with the permanent financial and commercial arrangements of the country.

In pursuance of the arrangement marked out, by him, as that which the Ministry intended to pursue, Sir Robert proceeded to bring forward in succession such measures as were necessary for enabling the machine of Government to move on until the commencement of a new session, and until those measures which he had it in con-

templation to propose, as remedies for the existing evils, could be matured, and, if sanctioned by Parliament, carried into effect. These measures passed through the House with scarcely a show of opposition, and, but for the discovery of the Exchequer Bill Fraud, which at this time occurred, Parliament would have been prorogued by the end of September, but which event did not occur till the first week in October, when an adjournment to February the 3rd took place.

On the day appointed Parliament met. The most important question which presented itself for the consideration of the House of Commons, was that respecting the Finances of the country. Previous to the Prorogation, Sir Robert Peel had stated that the deficiency in the Revenue, as compared with the Expenditure, exceeded two millions and a half, and his decided opinion as to the absolute necessity of adopting some measure by which this deficiency should be supplied, and the income of the country placed on such a footing as would, under existing circumstances, insure it against future deficiencies.

Previous to the adjournment, Sir Robert had more than once hinted, that he had it in contemplation to propose, as the only efficient remedy for the existing evil, a Property Tax. This announcement had created a lively sensa-

tion not only within the walls of Parliament, but throughout the country; and Sir Robert having given notice of his intention of bringing forward his Financial plan on the House going into a committee of Ways and Means, on the 11th of March, the attendance of Members on that day was unusually numerous, whilst the crowded state of the Stranger's Gallery, and all the avenues leading to the House gave an unequivocal illustration of the intense anxiety which prevailed amongst all classes to have the earliest possible intimation of the Ministerial plan on this vitally important question.

The House having resolved itself into a committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Green in the chair, Sir Robert Peel rose to bring forward his plan; which he did, in a speech which, for the extent of information it contained on the subject of which it treated, the perspicuity of its arrangement, and the force of argument by which he supported the positions he assumed, has seldom been equalled, and rarely, if ever, excelled. It is a source of regret with us that our limits will not admit of our giving more than extracts of this important statement of our Financial difficulties, and the proposed remedy for them.

The most profound silence was observed by

the whole House when Sir Robert rose, and said:

"Sir, as this House has sanctioned the votes which her Majesty's Government had considered it their duty to propose, for the chief military establishments of the country, I rise for the purpose of redeeming the pledge which I gave, that I would avail myself of the very earliest opportunity that was consistent with parliamentary usage and the public interest to develope the views of her Majesty's Government with respect to the financial and commercial policy of the country. No man, Sir, can feel more deeply than I do the magnitude and extent of the duty thus devolved upon me. No man can be more conscious than I am how disproportionate are my intellectual powers to the proper performance of that duty; but I should be unworthy of the trust committed to me, I should be unfit to stand in this place, in which Ministers of the British Crown have stood, if I felt disheartened or discouraged—if I could abandon that composed and contented mind—I may say even that buoyancy and alacrity of spirit—which ought to sustain every public man when he enters upon the fearless and the faithful discharge of a great public duty; when he is conscious that he is actuated by no motives that

are not honourable and worthy; when he feels the deep and intimate conviction, arising from the best conclusions which his imperfect and fallible judgment has enabled him to draw, that that which he is about to propose is conducive to the welfare, I might almost say essential to the well-being of the state.

"It is now my intention, on the part of her Majesty's Government, to undertake the responsibility of proposing that which we believe to be essential to the public interests to adopt. With you will rest the responsibility of adopting or rejecting the measures which I propose. Therefore, to enable you to perform the duty that you owe to your country, it will be necessary for me to lay before you every information upon every element of that on which it will be necessary for you to come to a full and impartial judgment.

"I shall now proceed, Sir, in the ordinary manner, to state the facts with respect to the finances and expenditure of the country. I, in the first instance, refer to the estimate which was formed by the Right Honorable gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer with respect to the probable revenue and expenditure of the country on the year ending the 5th April

1842. The Right Honorable gentleman calculated that the income of the country might be expected to realize the sum of £48, 310, 000 He calculated the expenditure for the same period, that is, for the year ending the 5th of April, 1842, at £50,731,000.

"The actual produce of the revenue, from the 5th of April, 1841, to the 26th February, 1842, was £43,730,000. If you estimate that the receipt for the current quarter of the year will be equal to the receipt of the corresponding quarter, last year; you must add to the actual receipt the sum of 4,323,000*l.*, and consequently the revenue will amount on the 5th of April to 48,053,000*l.*, being less than that estimated by the Right Honorable gentleman by about 200,000*l.* On the other hand, the expenditure will not be quite so great, at least there is a probability that it will not be so great as he estimated. The deficit, it is supposed, will be 2,421,000*l.* The deficiency, then, I take, for the present year, is 2,350,000*l.* I now proceed with the estimated income, for the year ending the 5th of April, 1843. I take the Customs to be 22,500,000*l.*; Excise 13,450,000*l.*; Stamps 7,100,000*l.*; Taxes 4,400,000*l.*; Post Office 500,000*l.*; Crown Lands 150,000*l.*;

Miscellaneous 250,000*l.*—Total estimate of the revenue for 1843, 480,35,000*l.*

The expenditure, now that the House has sanctioned the votes for the army and navy, can be estimated with greater accuracy. The interest on the debt will be 24,627,000*l.*; terminable annuities, 4,076,000*l.*; the interest on Exchequer bills. 722,000*l.*; making the total charge for the debt, 29,427,000*l.* The other charges on the Consolidated Fund, including the Civil List, which I take to be 390,000*l.*, are so numerous, that I suppose the House will, considering the task before me, excuse me from going through them in detail; but I take them at 2,368,000*l.*, making a total charge on the Consolidated Fund of 31,795,000*l.* The votes for the army, if ultimately sanctioned by the House, will be 6,617,000*l.*; the navy 6,713,000*l.*; the ordnance 2,084,000*l.*; and miscellanies chargeable upon the annual grant, 2,800,000*l.* The vote for Canada is, and the present is for the volunteers, 108,000*l.* I think it was understood that, when that charge should cease, a corresponding sum should be expended on fortifications. I, therefore, take it at 108,000*l.*; the charge for China upon the whole, is 675,000*l.* for the present year, which may be divided into

two parts, that is 175,000*l.* to defray the arrears of expenditure for the year that has terminated, and the vote of 500,000*l.* to meet the charges necessary to provide for the expense during the year ending the 5th of April 1843. The total estimated expenditure for the country, then, will be 50,819,000*l.* Thus, leaving a deficiency of 2,469,000*l.*

"But that deficiency is on the votes of the year, for the expenditure to be provided for within the year. To it, therefore, must be added the charges incurred on the Chinese war, for which I do not think it will be necessary to provide within the year. These charges will amount to about 500,000*l.* additional, to be added to the expenditure. But he would form an inadequate estimate of the expenses likely to be incurred in the war with China, who would confidently calculate on their being confined within the limits which I have specified. The expenses of the Chinese expedition stand thus:—the amount due to the the East India Company up to the 1st April, 1841, is 708,755*l.* A grant was made in the session of 1840, of 172,422*l.* This leaves arrears of former years to be provided for to the amount of 535,313*l.* The estimates of the expenditure to the 1st of

for then the deficiency in the income amounted to 2,414,000*l.*: and I am afraid that, though the calculation is only made up to 1841, we cannot depend upon the deficiency being less than 2,324,000*l.* There will be a deficit for the last year of 2,350,000*l.* A prospective deficit for the next year of 2,570,000*l.*, and a deficit for the two years in Indian finance of 4,700,000*l.* This is the amount of the deficiency which we are called upon to make up. I am now about to speak of this country exclusively, and of how its difficulties are to be surmounted. We cannot escape the consideration of this question, and it is our duty, before any proposition is made, well and carefully to consider the means of supplying the sum which is required. Shall we pursue the system on which we have been acting for twenty-five years? Shall we, in a time of peace, have resort to the miserable expedient of loans? Shall we try a re-issue of Exchequer bills? Shall we resort to savings' banks? Shall we have recourse to any of these plans, which are neither more nor less than permanent additions to our debt? We have to supply a deficiency of upwards of 5,000,000*l.* upon two years. Is there a prospect, by ordinary means, of retrieving the loss?

"Can you calculate, looking at the state of the country and of the world, regarding the unfortunate intelligence which has so lately reached us—can you calculate, do you anticipate a possibility of reducing the amount of our next year's expenditure? I do not anticipate that such can be the case. Is this an occasional or casual deficiency, and for which you can easily provide? Is it a deficiency for the present year? It is not. This deficiency has existed for the last seven or eight years. It is not an occasional deficiency. In 1838 the deficiency was 1,428,000*l.*, in 1839 it was 430,000*l.*, in 1840 it was 457,000*l.*, in 1841 it amounted to 1,851,000*l.*, in 1842 it amounted to 2,334,000*l.*; the amount of the deficiency in the five years was 7,502,000*l.* To that I add the estimated deficiency for 1843, 2,570,000*l.*, making in all, for the six years, a deficiency of 10,720,000*l.*

"After the proof I have given that our financial embarrassments are not mere occasional difficulties, will you have recourse to the miserable expedient of loans. I cannot propose such a measure. It is impossible that I could be a party to such a proceeding. I should think I was disgracing the station which I have the honor to hold did I accede to it. I can hardly

"I propose to you that for a time, to be limited, the incomes of this country should be called on to contribute a certain sum for the purpose of remedying this mighty and growing evil. I propose that the incomes of the country should bear a charge of 7*d.* in the 1*l.*, not amounting to quite three per cent., but which may be taken at 2*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* to the 100*l.*, for the purpose of not only supplying the deficiency in the revenue, but enabling me with confidence and satisfaction to propose those great commercial reforms which will have the effect of reviving commerce, and improving the manufactures of the country in a way that must soon re-act on every other interest, and which will ensure, even in a narrow pecuniary point of view, by the diminished price of the articles of consumption and the cost of living, compensation to every one subject to the pecuniary charge, while it will more than reward him for the burden imposed by relief from the contemplation of a mighty public evil.

"In the year 1798, when the prospects of this country were most gloomy, the Minister had the courage to propose, and the people had the fortitude to adopt, an Income Tax to the amount of ten per cent. In 1803, after the

rupture of the peace of Amiens, five per cent. was imposed on property: in 1805 it was raised to 6½, and in 1806 to ten per cent., and so it continued until the end of the war. I propose that the duty imposed on incomes should not exceed three per cent., and should, in point of fact, amount to 2*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* per cent. In 1814, incomes of 60*l.* were exempted from taxation, and those from 60*l.* to 150*l.* were taxed at a reduced rate. I shall propose that from this Income Tax all incomes under 150*l.* should be exempted. In the former Income Tax, in respect of that portion of the charge derived from the occupying tenants, the occupation of land in Great Britain was estimated at three-fourths of the rent. It was admitted, I believe, that that rate of profit was too high, and that the proportion of value of occupation as three-fourths of the rent was unreasonable. I propose, therefore, that the occupying tenant's occupation of land shall be estimated at one-half, instead of three-fourths of the rent. I believe that reduction to be perfectly just, and that the proportion I have fixed on was that contemplated in 1816, when Lord Bexley proposed a renewal of the Income Tax. I propose —and I see no ground for any exemption—

instead of 11,744,000*l.* I must deduct one-fourth on account of exemption, and that leaves 8,250,000*l.*, the produce of the tax being 155,000*l.* I will, therefore, recapitulate the total estimated amount of the three per cent. tax on incomes:—

Schedule A - - - -	1,600,000
Schedule B - - - -	150,000
Schedule C - - - -	646,000
Schedule D - - - -	1,220,000
Schedule E - - - -	155,000
	£3,771,000

" I shall now state what are the views of her Majesty's Government with respect to the duration of this impost, if it should be sanctioned by the house. I trust that Parliament will confirm the proposal I am now about to make, in order that an opportunity should be afforded of fully testing this experiment; and that they will not be unwilling, in case of necessity, to continue the duration of the tax for five years. But still there may be, as there have been before, and which I do not despair of witnessing again, those revivals of prosperity connected with the measures I am about to propose, which will make Parliament naturally anxious to have an opportunity of reconsidering this subject at an earlier period. They may wish to have an

opportunity of putting an end to this tax at an earlier period than at the close of five years; and although I contemplate with a view to the public interests its duration for that period, and though I trust, in case the experiment should not be completed, Parliament would not hesitate to prolong it, yet on the whole I think it more just, at the end of the first three years, to give Parliament an opportunity of sanctioning its continuance. I propose that the tenth of October shall be the end of the first half-year.

"I now come to consider a matter intimately connected with this, and of very great importance—the relations of Ireland with this country in reference to finance. Sir, in my opinion, if war should arise—I speak, of course, of some great contest which would call for the display of the energies of this country—I should not hesitate to express an opinion that Ireland ought to contribute—but when I am submitting to a tax for three years, when the amount of that tax does not exceed three per cent, I must of course consider, with reference to the public interests, whether it would be desirable to apply such a tax to Ireland. We must bear in mind that it is a tax to which Ireland was not subject during the period of the war, and that it is

a tax for the levying of which there exists no machinery in Ireland. At the same time, as no part of the United Kingdom will be more benefited by the measures which I am now proposing than Ireland, and as it is united with this country, I think it only fair that it should contribute its fair portion of the revenue which is about to be raised. I think, then, that I can suggest two modes by which I can raise from Ireland an amount nearly, or perhaps quite, equivalent to that which Ireland would have to pay under the property tax, which are perfectly consistent with the terms of the Act of the Union, and which will impose no additional burden on the great mass of the population.

"I propose, in the first place, to impose an additional duty of one shilling a gallon on spirits manufactured in Ireland; and I firmly believe that, by this means, a considerable revenue can be derived, not only without injury to the Irish distillers, or to Ireland itself, but even to the positive advantage of the whole country. I think, that if it were possible to equalize the spirit duties in the three countries, great advantage would result from it. It appears to me highly desirable that the produce of the three countries—the three constituent branches of this great empire—should be placed on precise-

ly the same footing, and that we should do away with all that system of duties and drawbacks connected with the intercourse between the three countries, which renders it necessary to maintain immense establishments, leads to great frauds, and operates most prejudicially to commerce.

" No one, I apprehend, will deny that spirits are a fit object for taxation; and that, indeed, the limit to the duty on the article was merely the amount at which it will produce the greatest revenue to the state. In itself there can be no objection to the imposition of the duty on spirits, and by that means encouraging the consumption of other exciseable articles, of a less exciting nature. Last year the consumption of Irish spirits amounted to 6,500,000 gallons. Taking, then, the present consumption, I find that, after allowing for some decrease of consumption and the increase of expense on account of supervision, I may hope to realise from the duty of one shilling per gallon on Irish spirits, about 250,000*l.* The other source from which I hope to derive a revenue, making with the new duty upon spirits an equivalent for that which I might expect to obtain from a property tax, is a perfectly legitimate impost, and will, to a certain extent, fall upon property.

" I propose, in respect to the great mass of

articles, and particularly in respect of those which are connected with property, to equalise the stamp duties in Ireland with the stamp duties in this country. I do not propose to increase the stamp duty in all cases. I propose to reduce the duty on charter notes in all parts of the United Kingdom from 35*s.* to 5*s.*, and I further propose to reduce the duty on bills of lading from 3*s.* to 6*d.* I propose to raise to the English level, in Ireland, those stamp duties which affect property, and that may fairly be considered as a contribution from Ireland equivalent to a contribution on account of a property tax. I estimate that the equalisation of the stamp duties in Ireland, with the exceptions I have mentioned, will produce 160,000*l.*, which, added to the 250,000*l.* which I expect to derive from the additional duty on spirits, will make a total of 410,000*l.*; and I firmly believe that the plan I have advised is a wiser and better mode of raising revenue from Ireland than by a property tax, for the levying of which there exists no machinery in that country.

"At the same time, however, I propose that Irish absentees shall be subject to the same property tax which they would have to pay if their estates were in England. If they find

the burthen onerous, they can escape from it by returning to their native country, and spending their incomes on their estates.

" There is another point to which I wish to call the attention of the House. At present there is a duty imposed by law of 4*s.* per ton on coal exported in foreign ships. At the time that duty was imposed, it was, of course, intended to be levied; but no duty being imposed upon coal exported in British ships, the operation of the reciprocity treaties has exempted coal exported in foreign vessels from the payment of duty. I must say I cannot conceive any more legitimate object for the imposition of duty than coal exported to foreign countries. It is important to consider the rapid increase in the quantity of coal exported. In 1831 it was 356,000 tons, and the duty levied upon that quantity was 50,000*l.*; in 1833 the quantity exported was 448,000 tons, and the duty was 64,710*l.*; in 1839 it was 1,192,000 tons; and in 1840 the quantity of coal exported had increased to 1,307,000 tons; but instead of realising 64,710*l.*, which was the revenue derived from a smaller quantity in 1833, the whole amount of duty was only 6,905*l.* I do not propose to increase the duty; I will not attempt to prohibit the exportation of coal; but I pro-

pose that the duty which was originally intended to be levied on coal exported in foreign ships, namely, 4*s.* per ton, shall be levied upon coal exported, whether in British or foreign vessels. By imposing the same duty on British as on foreign ships, we deprive foreigners, under the operation of the reciprocity acts, of all grounds of complaint. If the duty of 4*s.* per ton should continue to be paid upon the same number of tons of coals as are now exported, I shall obtain from this legitimate source of revenue about 200,000*l.*

" And now, having stated all the new taxes I mean to propose, it will perhaps be convenient to the House if I shortly sum up the total amount which I expect to derive from them. I calculate that the Income Tax of 7*d.* in the pound will produce 3,700,000*l.* I will deal now with aggregate sums only: from the stamp duty in Ireland I expect 160,000*l.*; the additional spirit duty 250,000*l.*; the duty on exported coal 200,000*l.*; total amount from the new imposts 4,310,000*l.*

" From this sum I have to deduct the present estimated deficiency of income as compared with expenditure, for which I must provide by an actual vote of the House. That deficiency amounts to 2,570,000*l.* after providing for which

I shall have a surplus of about 1,800,000*l.*; but then the House will bear in mind that the deficiency arises upon the votes for the year, and that I have to add to that the excess of expenditure on account of the China expedition, which I cannot estimate at less than 800,000*l.* Then, again, whatever measures the position of affairs in India may require us to adopt during the present year, must also be deducted from the surplus; but, for the present, subject to the additional deductions when they occur, I calculate upon a surplus of 1,800,000*l.*, after defraying the excess of expenditure on account of the actual votes.

"And now, having that excess of revenue, in what manner shall we deal with it? I propose to apply it in the manner which I think will be most conducive to the public interests, and most in consonance with public feeling and opinion—namely, by making great improvement in the commercial tariff of the country, and, in addition, by making a considerable abatement of the duties at present levied upon some of the great articles of consumption.—I look to the tariff, and I find that it comprises no less than twelve hundred different articles, subject to various rates of duty. During that interval which I have been blamed for taking, I can

assure the House that each individual article of the tariff has been subjected to the careful consideration of myself and my colleagues

"The general principle on which we proceed is, first, the removal of prohibition in every case, and the relaxation of duties of a prohibitory character. Secondly, the reduction of duties, to a very considerable amount, on raw materials used in manufactures. In some cases we shall propose to retain a merely nominal duty, rather for the purpose of enabling the Government to obtain statistical information than as an object of revenue; and in no case, or scarcely any, do we propose to levy a duty of more than five per cent., upon raw articles used in manufactures. Upon articles partially manufactured we propose to make a considerable reduction of duty. We propose, speaking generally, that the duty upon articles partially manufactured should not exceed twelve per cent. With respect to the duty on manufactured articles, we propose, again speaking generally, that the maximum duty should not exceed twenty per cent. in any case, We have arranged the whole of the tariff under twenty different heads. For instance, under the first head we have included live animals and provisions of all kinds; under the second, are included all articles which can be

classed under the name of spices; under the third, all articles that come under the denomination of seeds; under the fourth, wood for furniture; under the fifth, ores, minerals, metals, and all those articles which enter into manufactures; and, in order to relieve myself from the necessity of going through an immense mass of figures, I propose forthwith to lay before the House the amended scheme of the Government. Speaking generally, I may say, that out of 1200 articles we purpose to reduce the duty on 750, including all which enter into manufactures.

There are some very important articles, in respect to which we do not purpose to reduce the duty, partly from considerations of revenue exclusively, and partly because, upon our entering office, we found negotiations pending with many states on the subject of commercial treaties. We have done all in our power to continue those negotiations, and we have likewise entered into negotiations with other states for the same object.

"There are several articles now subject to duties, which enter into the negociations connected with the treaties to which I have alluded, with respect to which I shall humbly advise the House not to make any immediate reduction of duty. For instance, there are the articles of

tax is at present levied. I still maintain that the utmost caution should be exhibited in our relations with Canada, and that nothing should be rashly done that may be likely to affect injuriously the interests of its inhabitants. With this feeling I shall propose, and shall be anxious to benefit the Canadian as well as the British consumer.

"On these grounds I propose that after the 5th of April, 1844, the duty on foreign timber should be reduced to 25*s.* a load; that the duty on deals should at the same time be reduced to 30*s.*; and that the duty on lath wood should be reduced to 20*s.* If the House will consent to make this reduction in the duty on foreign timber, it will be necessary to consider how our relations with Canada stand with respect to the timber trade. With respect to those possessions, with which I trust this country will ever maintain the most friendly relations, I think it desirable that we should act on the principle of treating Canada as if it were an integral part of the empire. The distance of Canada from this country, and the cost of bringing timber to this country, must in itself place Canada under a great disadvantage in her commerce in that article with this country; and, therefore, I think, if the duty on timber

be reduced to 25*s.*, and the duty on foreign deals to 30*s.*, it appears to me that we have no alternative but to admit Canadian timber into this country at an almost nominal duty. Sir, I propose that the duty upon colonial timber be reduced to 1*s.* a load; that the duty upon deal be reduced to 2*s.* a load; and that the duty on lath wood shall be reduced to 3*s.* a load.

"Sir, there are at present levied certain duties on the export of British manufactures—duties which, I think, are contrary to a sound principle of legislation; and these duties I find amount to the sum of 108,000*l.* a year. Part of these duties arise from the export of woollens and of yarns, which are exported to countries with which we have no reciprocity treaties. I find the duty on woollen manufactures, linen yarns, silks, manufactured iron, other articles, earthenware, and provisions, amount annually to 85,200*l.* To these may be added for some minor articles about 20,000*l.*, giving a total of upwards of 100,000*l.* a year. Now, Sir, I propose to remit altogether the export duties on British manufactures, and thus there will be incurred a loss of revenue of 103,000*l.* a year.

"There is another and a different class of duties that I think unjust, and towards the

on account of India; to meet the increased charge which may be necessary to prosecute the war with China; to meet any increased reduction of duty which it may be necessary to propose on account of the completion of commercial treaties with others countries. I believe I have now concluded the task I have undertaken. If I have been enabled clearly (which is all I have aimed at)—clearly and fully to develope the views of her Majesty's Government, I am greatly indebted for that success to the very kind and patient attention with which the House has listened to the exceedingly long, and I am afraid, in some respects, tedious details into which I have been compelled to enter.

" I have performed on the part of her Majesty's Government, my duty. I have proposed, with the full weight and authority of the Government, that which I believe to be conducive to the public welfare. I now devolve upon you the duty, which properly belongs to you, of maturely considering and finally deciding on the adoption or rejection of the measures I propose. I am now addressing you after the duration of peace for 25 years. I am now exhibiting to you the financial difficulties and embarrassments in which you are placed; and my confident hope and belief is, that, following the example of those

who preceded you, you will look these difficulties in the face, and not refuse to make similar sacrifices to those which your fathers made for the purpose of upholding the public credit. You will bear in mind that this is no casual and occasional difficulty. You will bear in mind that there are indications amongst all the upper classes of society of increased prosperity and wealth —and that concurrently with these indications there exists a mighty evil which has been growing up for the last seven years, and which you now are called upon to meet. If you have, as I believe you have, the fortitude and constancy of which you have been set the example, you will not consent with folded arms to view the annual growth of this mighty evil. You will not reconcile it to your consciences to hope for relief from diminished taxation. You will not adopt the miserable expedient of adding, during peace, and in the midst of these indications of wealth and of increasing prosperity, to the burdens which posterity will be called upon to bear. You will not permit this evil to gain such gigantic growth as ultimately to place it far beyond your power to check or control. If you do permit this evil to continue, you must expect the severe but just judgment of a reflecting and retrospective posterity. Your conduct will be

has done for ages gone by, this country, so highly favoured by Providence, will stand foremost amongst the empires of the world, the most powerful and the most enlightened in the rank of nations.

In his domestic circle, Sir Robert Peel is blest with a portion of happiness, equalled by few, exceeded by none. The Right Honorable Baronet was, in 1820, at the age of thirty-two, united to Julia, the youngest daughter of General Sir John Floyd, Bart., a lady not so much distinguished by her high rank and personal accomplishments, as she is by the beauties of her mind and the amiability of her manners. By this lady Sir Robert has a large family, consisting of several sons and daughters. The eldest daughter, Miss Julia Peel, about twelve months since, became Lady Villiers, having honoured the heir of the Jersey family with her hand; and from a recent announcement we find that the happiness of the youthful pair has been increased by the birth of a daughter.

THE END.

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